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No. 5646

PUNCH VOL. LIV
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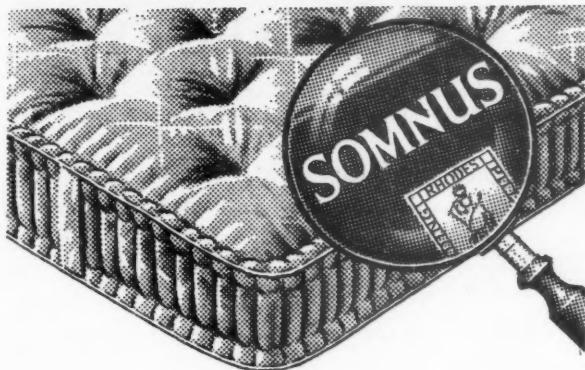


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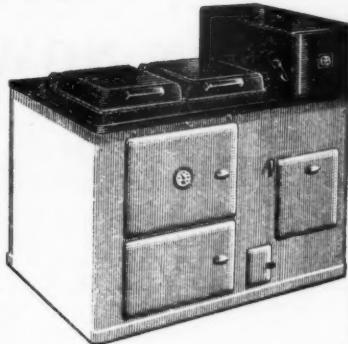
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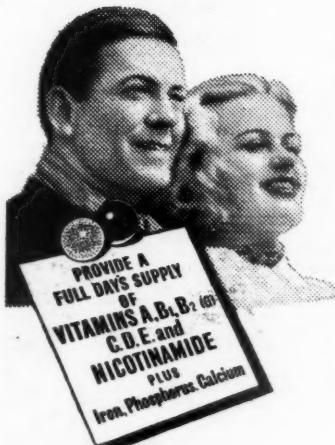
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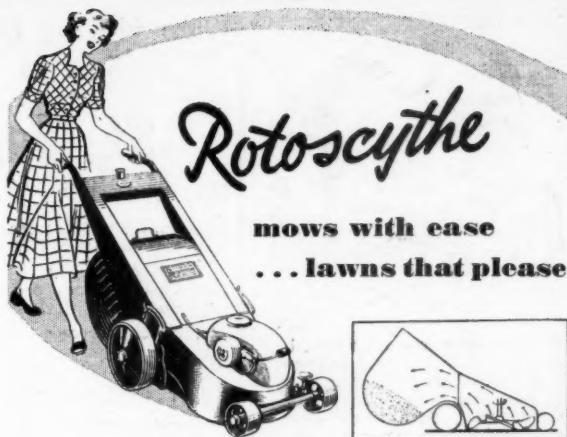
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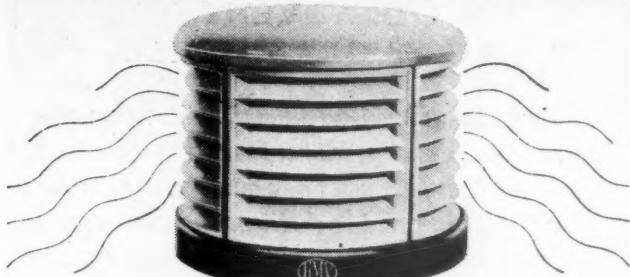
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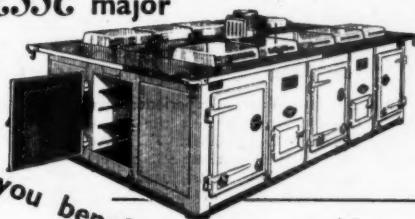
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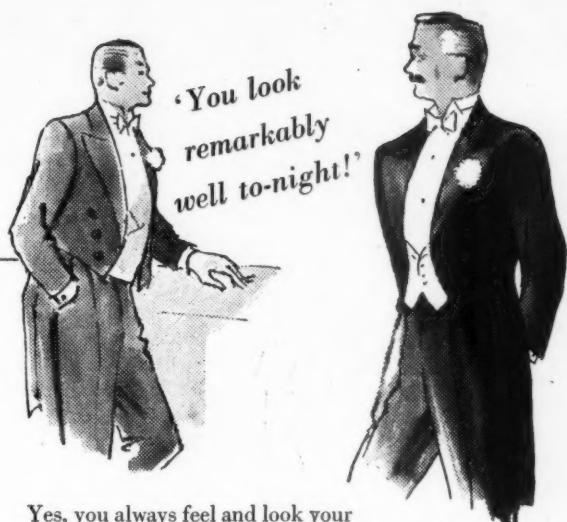


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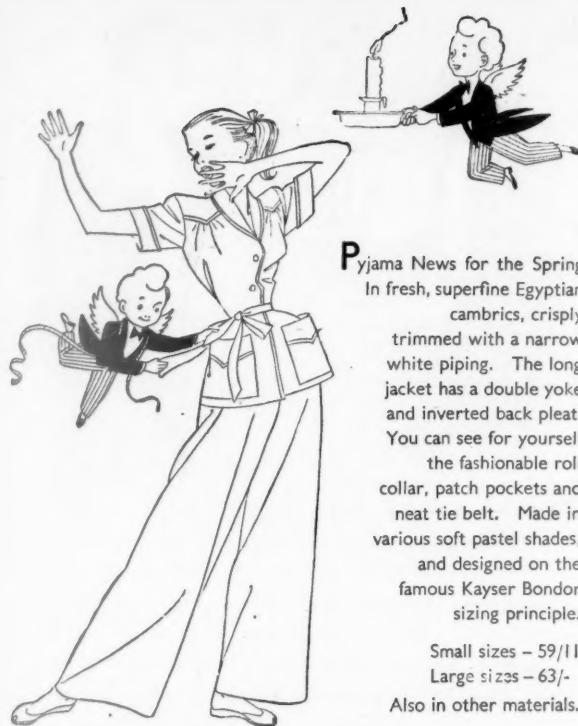
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FOUR WIDTHS IN YOUR SIZE

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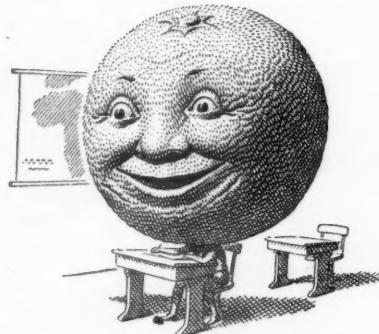
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I did, said the Schoolboy



- it's in a 'class' of its own

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The Quality Soft Drink



SQUASHES 3/- PER BOTTLE



PUNCHY

OR
THE LONDON CHARIVARI

Vol. CCXVI No. 5646



February 23 1949

Charivaria

THE new ration-book will appear in April. Readers will find that the volume is still produced in complete conformity with the authorized economy standards.

“SHOE TRADE. Wanted—Good Revolutionary Pressman.”
Advt. in East Anglian paper.

Would the editor of *Pravda* do?



“It is Mr. Smith, Mr. Jones, Mr. Robinson, and Mr. Brown who are pulling us through our present troubles,” says an M.P. Wasn’t there some talk, at one time, of a Mr. Marshall?

“Where does glue come from?” asks a youthful correspondent. The wrong end of the tube, as a rule.

“I like listening to the Third Programme in the dark,” says a correspondent. If this gets monotonous he can always switch on the Light.

The Case of the Tired Hurricane

“Latest reports place the hurricane less than 175 miles south of Cape Hatteras, lumbering north at a steady 10 miles an hour.”
Torquay paper.

So successful have the yellow bands been that the London police are now said to be thinking seriously of developing the idea by the use of red ones prohibiting smash-and-grab raids in busy shopping centres.



Asthma sufferers are recommended to travel by plane at high altitudes. The latest dodge is to ask your doctor for free air tickets.

An author says that he spent five years writing comedies no producer would look at. It seems a case of all work and no play.

Red Rag Corner
“All districts of England, except Scotland . . .”
B.B.C. weather forecast.

A detective reports that the bricks used by smash-and-grab raiders are now often done up neatly with brown-paper and string like a parcel. Later on, no doubt, they will be addressed so that they can be returned through the post by the police.

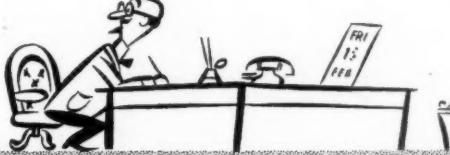


“It is no good trying to coerce Norway into the Atlantic Pact,” says a political writer. You can take a Norse to the water . . .

“An escalator caught fire at Hyde Park Corner tube station during the rush-to-work to-day. Passengers were turned off.”
Evening Standard.

At the main?

A psychiatrist reports that several patients complained of mysterious pains in the back. He finally traced the cause to a protruding spring in the consulting-room couch.



Brock's Benefit

YOU can fox a man or badger a man, you can't stoat or weasel or otter him; but whereas in foxing him you do as a fox does, in badgering you do as a badger is—or was—done by. So strange is wild animal life in this land of ours.

I wrote not long ago about a friend of mine who didn't believe in badgers. "I have been about the country at night as much as anybody else," he said, "and I have never found one yet." When I told him I had seen them he said they were a mere hallucination. When I told him they had one at the Zoo, he said it was probably an ant-eater, and anyhow he could never find out where the 74 bus started from.

He was a heretic of course. There are plenty of badgers, more now than there used to be. Mr. Anthony Buxton, in a delightful book called *The Travelling Naturalist*, has described a moment in what is now part of Epping Forest.

"Imagine the scene. We had now below us—none of them more than twenty yards away—seven badgers, ten fox cubs and a vixen, not to mention rabbits, and the light was still good. The badgers at once began to play in a ring of their own, paying not the smallest attention to the fox cubs, who were engaged in every imaginable game a few yards away. The badgers gave out grunts and squeaks which rather reminded me of ferrets in a bag, and their main form of sport was to let their next-door neighbour get half out of the hole and then jerk him backwards with a tweak of his hind leg from underground."

Miss Frances Pitt, who fascinates the readers of the *Evening News*, seldom seems to have breakfast without a badger or two at the board, and now we have Mr. Ernest Neal, who seems to have been devoting his nights for I don't know how long to studying the home life, the haunts and the habits and the food of the badgers until he must have become in danger of being made an honorary member of a sett. And what a sett! The badger's sett is liable to be tunnelled and cellared underground for a hundred yards or more, and when his bedding of bracken or leaves is getting untidy he brings it up to be dried and aired in a thoroughly gentlemanly way. Or makes his wife and daughters do it, I should guess.

There are two things that have always baffled the human biped about the badger. Imagine yourself a beast with plenty of strength and cunning, a tremendous bite and a lot of long hair (and I have no reason to suppose you are not), and would you want to do all this digging and disappearing and never coming out except at night? You live, as a rule, in a very wild country home. In many parts of the world there are no other animals around to worry you. Why then do you insist on this perpetual noctivagation? You are rather short-sighted, you say, and you have not availed yourself of Mr. Aneurin Bevan's free spectacles. In my opinion that is no excuse. It is your own habit of living underground that has weakened your eyesight. You might just as well be up and about and doing in the glorious light of day, like the weasel, the stoat and the hare, or take to a pleasant life, as the otter does, on the margin of a stream. But there is no arguing with you. Badger you are and budge you will not, till the dusk of the day falls or the light of the moon appears.

The other habit you have (and this is a very endearing one) is that you eat almost any kind of food. Mr. Neal has drawn up your diet sheet in his amazingly painstaking

book. You eat young rabbits, old rabbits, rats, mice, voles, hedgehogs, moles, dead lamb, live lamb, birds, eggs, snakes, lizards, frogs, toads, slugs, snails, woodlice, bees, wasps, beetles, worms, acorns, nuts, blackberries, apples, corn, bluebell bulbs, pig nuts, wild parsley and grass. A large nutritive intake. But you do not eat soya beans, ground nuts, Argentine beef or snoek. This may be lack of opportunity or merely a fad, but very few animals except man and the badger eat so many different things.

It would be very interesting to put a badger in a large pen or cage, and surround him with the whole of this menu at once and see how many courses he ate, and which first, and how much at a time. I have half a mind to do it. But I dare say there would be an outcry in the House of Commons if I did.

The chief service rendered by the badger to man is the provision of shaving-brushes, and it seems strange that one omnivore should be destined to yield up his fur in order to remove the fur from another. I once wrote some lines for this paper about an old shaving-brush, so badly worn that I had to throw it away. They began:

*Shall I pour water on it from the geyser,
Badger, on this that was a part of thee?
Or strew soft shaving-papers silently,
Or scatter old blades from my safety razor
Such as some Western pirate loves to fix
Up in green envelopes at two-and-six?
Or wouldst thou rather, as in life before,
Beechmast and eggs or what of other meat
(Ere commerce cleft thy hide and made it sweet)
Fed thee in that dark cavern thou didst bore,
Scooped by those inturned feet?*

These lines are in some part derivative. So, perhaps, were those of Lewis Carroll in "Sylvie and Bruno":

*There be three Badgers on a mossy stone,
Beside a dark and covered way:
Each dreams himself a monarch on his throne,
And so they stay and stay—
Though their old Father languishes alone,
They stay, and stay, and stay, and stay."*

So much for the badger in song. Badger fur is used in Scotland for making the best sporrans, and badger-skins were used for footwear by the most wealthy of the Ancient Israelites. The badger at times emits a terrible blood-curdling scream, which accounts, I think, together with his piebald appearance, for thousands of the gnomes, pixies, trolls and banshees which populate our folklore.

That is all I have to say about badgers at the moment. But badgers are still dug out with the help of terriers and drawn at the end with tongs. Those who wish to know more should look at Mr. Neal's interesting book, *The Badger*,* which contains some of the most beautiful photographs of badgers (especially one in Radnorshire) that I have ever seen.

How far badgers badger man and how much man may be allowed to badger badgers I suppose Parliament is about to decide.

EVOE.

* No. 1 in "The New Naturalist Monograph" series (Collins, 12/6).



ROUND THE CORNER



"But this is an odd day to me!"

To a Brace of Eyes

I AM wearing a pickelhaube for protection from pecking birds,
I am wearing a kilt of grey cast-iron to guard me from grazing herds,
I am saved from the bites of angry ants by boots of enormous size,
But nothing will guard my aching heart from the brightness of your eyes.

I have seen a mercury vapour lamp that glowed with a ghastly glare,
I have stood and blinked at a flying bomb that burst in the midnight square,
I have stared in the face of the rising sun, nor flinched from his burning rays,
But still I tremble and turn my eyes when I meet your dazzling gaze.

They have launched a cruiser and seven sloops in the salty tears I weep,
I have wallowed in pheno-barbitone, but you haunt me in my sleep,
My love is as endless as Lowland rain that drizzles and never dries,
But it sizzles and steams like a Turkish bath in the brightness of your eyes.

I am guarding my captive memories in the dungeons of my brain,
I have hooded Longing upon my wrist and she shall not fly again,
I have shut up my hopes in a heavy safe and hidden away the key,
But I lost my heart in your limpid eyes and it never comes back to me.

I can steal a glance at your dainty hands with hardly a single shriek,
I can look at your long and lustrous locks, if bound to a block of teak,
I can look at your lips for a second or two, and your nose for almost three,
But if I look in your eyes again I am lost for eternity.

I will build me a little bottomless hut on top of a topless pole,
And there I will take my store of days and the remnants of my soul.
I shall need no fire to keep me warm in the whirling winter snow;
I have only to think of the horrible heat of the heart I left below.

Roll Your Own Hawsers

EVER since I read Arnold Bennett's story, *The Death of Simon Fuge*, I have been engaged in a search for the particular brand of tobacco with which Mr. Brindley constructed his own cigarettes in the train between Knype and Burslem. It has taken me four years to locate a packet of it, which is the same length of time that it takes to qualify for a second mate's certificate. The coincidence may appear less striking to others than it does to me, but at least it serves to introduce what might be called the second subject of this sonata: the examination paper issued by the Merchant Navy Officers' Training Board for first year apprentices. The fifth question on this paper is as follows:

"Describe how you would open up a new coil of hawser-laid manila rope."

That strikes me as a pretty searching test for a boy of seventeen. One would like to see what the Brains Trust would make of it. One thing is certain, and that is that it would be no good saying that it depended what you meant by a coil of hawser-laid manila rope. There you are, standing on the fo'c'sle-head in a nasty choppy sea; and there is the rope, hard and springy and intractable, looking up at you in its inscrutable way, while the bo's'n stands by with his arms akimbo waiting to see what sort of a mess you will make of it. How are you going to begin?

Mr. Brindley, no doubt, would have started by rolling himself a cigarette. Sailors are very skilful at rolling cigarettes; so (I believe) are cow-punchers, but what Jefferson called "a decent regard for the opinion of mankind" precludes me from extending the scope of this article to include anything connected with the punching of cows. We are talking about hawsers; or alternatively (for it would be wrong to dogmatize) about rolling cigarettes. There is nothing magical about making a cigarette; a reasonable quantity of tobacco is placed in the trough of the paper, which is then rolled into a cylinder, moistened with the tip of the tongue (any part of the tongue will do) and pressed down. We are now ready to start uncoiling the rope.

The first step is to find at least one of the ends. If we can find two, so much the better; if three are discovered it is advisable to suspect a mistake. Grasping the end of the rope firmly in



"Men can be very trying at times."

both hands, we move gingerly backwards, keeping a wary eye on the coil to see how it reacts. Probably the first thing that happens is that we tread heavily on a pot of red paint, or a swill-bucket, or the bo's'n's gouty toe. Passing this off with a carefree laugh and a merry quip we now give the end of the rope a smart jerk.

All sorts of thoughts pass through our mind in the next few seconds. We recollect, too late, that someone once told us the proper way to uncoil a new rope was to suspend it on its axis by a capstan-bar and coil it down right-handed. We realize that our cigarette has gone out, though that is completely irrelevant and is doubtless due to the fact that we did not use the right brand of tobacco. We wonder whether it will be a fine day to-morrow. Above

all we are conscious of an overpowering wish that we had never come to sea.

What has happened of course (as any fool might have foreseen) is that the coil of rope has reared up on its side, given us a look of mingled reproach and contempt, and, rolling briskly across the deck, disappeared over the side.

Much now depends on whether the loose end of the rope has coiled itself round our ankle; if it has, there is really nothing more to be said. But if our luck has stood by us we should lose no time in reporting to the bo's'n that the rope has gone overboard. That leaves us free to consider the next question on the paper: "Give in your own words the substance of Article 17, which begins 'Risk of collision . . .'"

Candidates are permitted to smoke.
G. D. R. D.



"If you should want anything, George, just scream."

Whitehall Blunders Again.

ONE may assume that the Board of Trade, having abolished coupons for men's suits and things, sat back feeling some sort of satisfaction with their efforts. The reason why nobody has as yet disillusioned them may be that the ordinary, decent, freedom-loving Englishman has not yet recovered from the mental shock which this incredibly ill-conceived action produced.

When I read the headlines at the breakfast table, I could hardly believe my eyes, so incomprehensible did it appear that any responsible government should wish to meddle about with a perfectly good, smoothly working system of clothes rationing.

I suppose I have been as adversely affected as anybody by this departmental blunder.

For some years now, I have gone about with my four baggy suits, in a perfectly happy and contented frame of

mind. The general impression I have been able to give, without any undue effort, was that of a man who could well afford to order half a dozen suits were he not good-natured enough to give up his own clothing coupons to his family. A shrug, a philosophical smile, a casual reference to the speed at which children grow, and the thing was done. Thanks to shortsightedness in high places, those days are past.

I had been contemplating a slight alteration to my dinner-jacket. This garment will now have to remain too tight, because my tailor knows perfectly well that I require new suits. Witty remarks about the controlled price of coupons being too high—a sure defence against tailors in the good old days—are now clearly pointless.

Again, a friend of mine was fortunate enough to be burgled while in Germany and by periodic complaints about the ridiculously small allocation of coupons

granted him by the authorities to replace his wardrobe, he has been able to live without any loss of face on an old brown pin-stripe and two pairs of grey flannel trousers. It would seem that he is now faced with something little short of financial ruin.

It was bad enough, in all consciousness, when they abolished coupons for gloves and shoes. The latest move is infinitely more harmful. Nor is there any guarantee that this is the end.

The Board of Trade would have done better to remember the advice of Kipling's Norman baron to his son; about how, when the Saxon stands like an ox in the furrow, with his sullen set eyes on your own, and grumbles "This isn't fair dealings"—my son, leave the Saxon alone.

I would not be at all surprised if by this typical example of senseless, bureaucratic interference the Government does not lose the next Election.

Chrysaor

THERE is one magic pasture high upon
the slopes of Helicon
below the snow
a sweet-grassed valley which no man has trod.

There Chrysaor's golden muzzle is thrust among
the thyme and harebells.
Chrysaor,
gold-winged as cheating Hope,
Chrysaor, Pegasus' twin.

Not even a god
has ridden him, star-shod
between the constellations, or through the thin
keen air above Olympus.

Once I dreamed
my feet were dew-cold moonlit grass
of that far, fabulous pasture, and I came
on Chrysaor sleeping
and with a rope of flame
lent by Apollo dared to halter him.

Up sprang Medusa's son,
The moonlight dim
quivered like water-rippled light along
each trembling, passionate limb

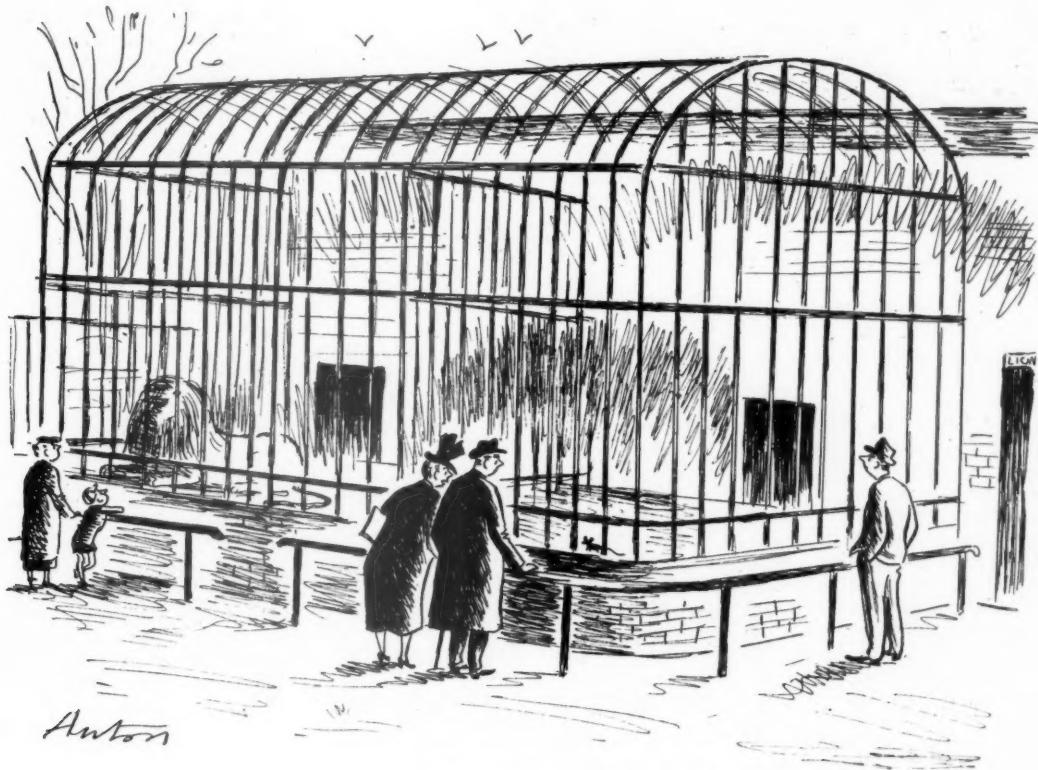
and the great wings unfolded as he reared—
one blow from either pinion would have felled
the Minotaur:
he tried to fling himself
into the air at one spring:
but the rope held.

Then Chrysaor spoke:

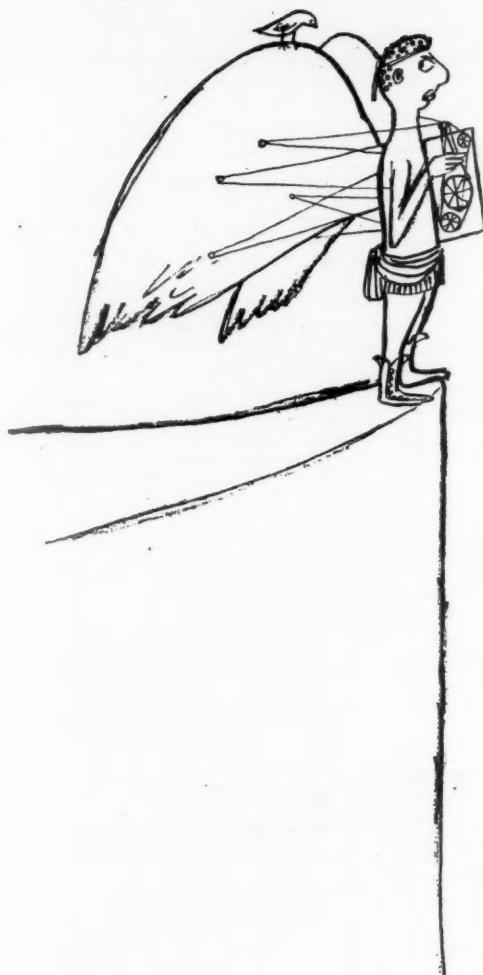
"Mount, then, and ride me
through the heights of Space:
mount: you shall look
upon the Gorgon's face
and not be turned to stone
for I will bear you.
I am Beauty's own
winged, wond'rous self
from blood and horror sprung
and made immortal
for I am the speech
upon God's tongue."

I might have ridden Chrysaor . . .
might have seen
things stranger than exist in terrene lands
but, though the rope held,
and the winged horse was tame
the rope, Apollo's rope, the rope of flame
burned both my hands.

R. C. S.



"Surely they ought to fit this cage with smaller mesh."



Andy Fairweather

A Young Official's Letters to His Father

1st.

DEAR DAD,—I arrived here safely, and I've got my office now, a pretty decent place, with a wizard filing-cabinet. My only trouble is—what do I do with my time? I finish my day's work in about half an hour, then there's nothing left to do.

A couple of chaps breezed in yesterday and asked me to help them with a problem. It had taken them an hour and a half—I did it in five minutes. Pretty good, dad, eh?

There's one thing, though—I'll have tons of time to send you nice long letters, and I'll want your advice. I'm bucked that you were in this job before you retired.

Your son, George.

2nd.

MY DEAR SON,—I received your very welcome letter to-day. You will soon find your work ample—it is only lack of knowledge of office routine that gives you the impression that it is insufficient to fill the day.

At all costs, you must avoid giving anyone the impression that you do not have enough work. All inquiries from fellow officials should be answered by saying that your time is completely filled up. Should anyone ask your help, point out that you will give them your help when the state of your own work affords the time. Your fault always lay in being impetuous. Be helpful, of course.

Should a fellow official take an hour

and a half over a problem, it is unwise to do the problem in five minutes, unless the official be your junior. Should it be your senior, take two hours, and remember to point out that the problem was exceedingly difficult. Should your answer be different from your senior's—and yours correct of course—tell him that your answer was the same as his, but one point has occurred to you, and you want his advice. Then present your own answer. Your senior will convey the impression that he is helping you out of a difficulty. Do not interfere with this impression.

Lastly, a few old files spread out on your desk will give a good impression. Change the files regularly of course.

With best wishes for your success,
Your loving Father.

4th.

DEAR DAD,—I have taken your advice, and have my desk pretty well covered with files now. While I was going over one of the old files I came across an entry which said: "6 Epothlems."

What is an epothlem, dad?
Your son, George.

6th.

MY DEAR SON,—I am pleased to know that you are now settling down to your work and seeing it in the proper light. Continue in this way and you'll be a credit to

Your loving Father.

10th.

MY DEAR FATHER,—Yours of the 6th to hand, and the contents noted. I regret that owing to heavy pressure of work it will be impossible for me to write to you as frequently as I have been doing in the immediate past.

I note that you did not explain what an epothlem was. As I could not find this word in the dictionary I went to the Head of our section and asked him what it was. He asked me to spell it, then said everyone knew what an epothlem was, and that I should turn up the files for its meaning and not worry him, who had more work to do than he could possibly manage.

I then consulted the second most senior officer, who said "You too? The Head's been on to me by phone, asking me what the thing was. Surely you can find out such a simple thing for yourself." He was very busy and could not spare me much time.

Would you please tell me what an epothlem is, dad?

Your loving Son.

11th.

DEAR GEORGE,—I received your letter to-day. In my opinion you are

settling down admirably. Don't take too many problems to your senior officers, however, though it is wise to take some of the simpler ones now and again.

With love from
Your Father.

20th.

DEAR FATHER,—I have now taken the question of epothlems a step farther. I suggested to the Head that I send a form round our branches to find out the number of epothlems in their possession. He thought it a good idea, and I am now busy drafting the necessary form.

Excuse the brevity of this letter, but I am exceedingly busy.

Love from George.

22nd.

DEAR GEORGE,—By this time the preliminary work on your form will be well under way, and I will not presume to give you advice on it. You will have many precedents in your files.

I shall be interested to know the outcome of the matter.

Kindest regards from Dad.

29th.

DEAR FATHER,—Enclosed find supplementary question asked in the House. Very busy.

George.

Mr. Snootley (Taradiddle): Further to the preceding question, is the Parliamentary Secretary aware of the extreme shortage of epothlems—

Parliamentary Secretary: Of what?

Mr. Snootley: Of epothlems in some sections of the Civil Service. Is he aware that this shortage is holding up progress in these sections, and what steps is he taking to increase the supply of these articles?

Parliamentary Secretary: I am aware of this shortage, which is of very recent growth, and is purely temporary. The most active steps are being taken to overcome this shortage, and, if necessary, import licences will be issued to the manufacturers.

31st.

DEAR DAD,—What do you think, dad? The Parliamentary Secretary was put through to me to-day and asked me what epothlems were. Whoopee!

Your loving son, George.

1st.

MY DEAR SON,—I am very proud of you.

I must apologize for not having answered your previous questions as to what an epothlem was. By this time

you will have come to your own conclusions as to the nature of the epothlem, and will realize that the subject is too intricate, too vast, to give a simple reply to the question: "What is an epothlem?" I am sure that you would inform the P.S. that the matter was in capable hands, was under control, and that it need cause him no further concern.

You may wonder how I know about the epothlem. I have a confession to make. When I entered the office originally I found it peopled by experts, the only exception being myself. So I became the epothlem expert, the one and only epothlem expert, until recently, for I was the sole inventor and creator of the epothlem.

You will, of course, treat the epothlem carefully, regarding it, not as the ship of your career, but as the

tender that takes you out to that ship. Is it too much to hope that some day a third George will don the mantle of the epothlem expert?

Forgive an old man's sentimentality, but to be confronted after all those years by the child of one's brain—but enough.

I beg of you to be careful of your health. Please do not overwork.

Your most affectionate Father.

○ ○

Hold Tight

"WIMBLEDON COMMON, just off."—Advt.

○ ○

"Grand Piano for sale. Owner moving from the district. In good condition, except one leg."—Advt. in Dorset paper.
Gout?



"I'm sorry, dearie, but Alexandra Palace keeps cutting in."



H. J.'s Dramatic Fragments

ONE holiday we spent yachting with some friends who had won that fine vessel *The Ocean Velocipede* in a Christmas draw. She was a house-yacht, so the problem of navigation did not arise, and our first evening I busied myself in the galley preparing canapés for a forthcoming exchange of visits with the local fishing-fleet. Unfortunately my wife, whom nothing would cure of hauling on ropes, found one that started a foghorn, and the inhabitants of the port, conditioned by generations of seafaring to take prompt action on receipt of the warning, at once hustled about fitting yellow filters on the street lamps, muffling their young in thick scarves and manning the emergency lighthouse, despite the bright sunlight all around. Feeling responsible for my wife's actions, and even more for any actions brought against her, I weakly tried to escape from the situation, and the form of escapism I adopted was the Composition of Drama *q.v. infra*.

THE WHYS AND WHEREFORES OF SCHIZOPHRENIA IN MAN AND BEAST

(The scene is a Public Gardens)

NANNY PECKWORT. Dulcinda, leave that pekinese alone: it is not a breed to which one offers sandwiches. Bertram, pray occupy yourself with some open-air sport: indoor fireworks are not in place here. Prairie-Flower, clean your spectacles.

TROOPER QUINN. I would never have believed a smart-looking girl like you would have been so hard on them.

NANNY PECKWORT. Impertinence! Kindly keep your observations to yourself! *Avaunt!*

TROOPER QUINN. How which? Why the stand-offishness? Give us a kiss!

NANNY PECKWORT. Certainly, why didn't you ask before?

PARK-KEEPER. Yes, sir, well may you ask whether this job is not monotonous. It would be, sir, I don't doubt, if they didn't give us these spikes. That's what keeps

the men contented, always something to read. Rare games we have when we go off duty, piecing the bits together.

ANDREW HO. What is to-day's bag, Keeper-man?

PARK-KEEPER. Very poor, sir. High wind to-day, just blows everything up into the trees. Only the cover of a pamphlet about reforming the Whips Office, a piece of wallpaper with eyes looking out from behind rhododendron bushes and a strip of a letter which says "I don't know the Japanese for it, but the English is 'Charterparty.'"

ANDREW HO. You have missed the pound note, Keeper-man.

PARK-KEEPER. It's only forged, sir. There's always a lot of them about on Tuesdays. Hi! Get away there! Larrikins, sir, that's no more and no less than what they are. They come across from the Theological College and they climb over General Gomshaw's statue and they stick crépe hair on it. It's not respectful.

ANDREW HO. Why is he riding side-saddle, Keeper-man?

PARK-KEEPER. Modernism in sculpture, sir, modernism in sculpture. We shall have no right to complain if we go the way of Greece and Rome. The sun is setting on us, sir, as sure as homing pigeons.

ANDREW HO. Let's hope, Keeper-man, there's a good moon.

NANNY PECKWORT. We must be getting along now, I fear. I will meet you again at three-thirty. Don't be late. Punctuality lends spice to an affair.

TROOPER QUINN. Quite in the toils I appear to be.

NANNY PECKWORT. Now, all together: Good-bye, Peter Pan, good-bye, Wendy.

DULCINDA. S'long, eads.

BERTRAM. If you can't be good, be careful.

PRALIE-FLOWER. I'm as hungry as hell.

FIRST MODEL YACHTSMAN. Sir, will you kindly keep your sampan from fouling my dhow?

SECOND MODEL YACHTSMAN. As a ratepayer I resent that remark. Why should your dhow have the right of way? I pay my share of the upkeep of this pond and I claim, sir, my share of the use of it.

FIRST MODEL YACHTSMAN. Do not attempt to intimidate me, sir. I will not be frowned down by your beetling your brows at me. You may hope to sail your sampan rough-shod over the boats of others and to avoid the just consequences of your insolence by a display of threatening grimaces and menacing gestures, but you have mistaken your man, sir; you have bitten off more than you can chew.

SECOND MODEL YACHTSMAN. It is my painful duty, sir, to inform you that you are obviously unused to sailing your vessel in the company of gentlemen. As one who has just paid heavy Death Duties on the estate of an aunt, I am entitled to call upon the constabulary, to whose upkeep I have so heavily contributed, for protection against being molested in my pastimes.

FIRST MODEL YACHTSMAN. The first action of any police officer on approaching your vicinity, sir, would be to apprehend you as a brawler and a man who is unfit to be permitted to sail his sampan upon public waters.

THIRD MODEL YACHTSMAN. I have solved your difficulties by sinking both your craft with my model torpedoes.

FIRST AND SECOND MODEL YACHTSMEN. Allies! Shoulder to shoulder! In he goes!

THIRD MODEL YACHTSMAN (*sinking*).

I remember, I remember,
The house where I was born.
The little window where . . .

FINIS



"Remember, Mrs. Gossidge, our imagination can play us some queer tricks."

Musings

THE first thing I want to muse about is the cookery book. There are a tremendous number of these books in the world, so many that it is quite amazing to see one like yours in someone else's kitchen, but the average to a kitchen is one and a half and some pamphlets, by which I mean nothing more statistical than that a kitchen containing five of book size may be considered keen. They are kept in a drawer, where they have no chance of impressing visitors, or on a shelf, where they slide diagonally in the hopeless way of all books left free at one end. Cookery books may be divided into those with coloured photographs and those with none, because it is not necessary to read the illustrated sort to feel hungry. They may also be divided into those written for nowadays and those which give the hopeful a basis to diverge from; and into those with varnished covers (a modern development unknown to our ancestors) and those with cloth covers raised in pale blotches.

Where cookery books are not so easy to divide is in the matter of indexes. I don't think I am being unfair to this fine branch of literature, or to my readers' powers of looking a thing up, when I say that almost no cookery book known to my readers does not sometimes have its index muttered at for leaving out something the looker-up knows is in the book, or for putting Broad Beans under Broad and every other kind under Beans, or for otherwise being extraordinarily human. The truth probably is that arranging words with that niggling consistence and alphabetical exactitude demanded of an index and planning a dinner for six using only the oven are talents that do not go together, as my readers may deduce for themselves by their attitude to the highbrow arguments that float through to the kitchen during a dishing-up climax. Dishing-up, by the way, has never had a fair deal in a cookery book,

which by taking each process separately makes it sound as easy as, done that way, it would be.

I must add a word about the language of cookery books, which is, as is natural, their own; they have a brisk attitude to "a" and "the," a well-defined range of verbs—all practical and many describing the sound of a kitchen on a Sunday morning—and a tendency to put the adverb in what seems a queer place until you try it for yourself and find that any alternative would be literary. I think the only other aspects I need mention are their readers' suspicion that "for 4 persons" means four people who do not know each other well enough to let themselves go, and the fact that when the cooking member of a household is seen reading a cookery book after lunch the household may expect something sensational for tea.

MY next piece of thought is about Wellington boots. These tall rubber boots, fringed round the feet with petrified hay, take their name from a famous man whose name, by a surprising coincidence, happens to describe them exactly when new. They are called gumboots for short or by people feeling tough, and when walked in on a brick or stone floor they make a sloshing clumping sound which is tremendously recognizable. When walked in on a proper floor they are an object of the most legitimate reproach known to naggers, which is why their wearers so often stand at doors and shout for pieces of string. They vary enormously in size from the pathetic up to the colossal, and in weight from nothing to what those who wear a lighter sort consider superhuman. People putting on earthy Wellingtons over dreadful old trousers sometimes think they would look good on a horse, but this is not the kind of thing people say out loud. Still, facts are facts, and there is something in the way the trousers tuck into the boots that justifies the more fanciful in an almost bow-legged departure from the kitchen door. Finally I must mention the putting on and taking off of Wellingtons; this calls for a certain amount of standing on one leg, with the necessary wobbling and hopping, and is one of the most characteristic processes in the footwear world.

I THINK it will be nice if I end with something about the first day of spring. I don't mean the official opening, or even the first day when people go about saying that it is like spring, but that funny feeling we get—often as early as the beginning of January—which we can only describe as a spring feeling and which we haven't had since September. Often it comes over those doing the dullest jobs on the greyest afternoons; usually, I think, they are outdoors, if only just, perhaps banging out the doormat or shovelling coal from one of those galvanized bunker things where you dig at the gap at the bottom and wait for the avalanche. To such people there may come that sudden anticipatory expansion of the soul which it is so much easier to call indefinable—a word, after all, with quite a definite meaning—that I shan't try to get any nearer.

ANDE.

A DISCLAIMER

AN article in the issue of *Punch* for December 15th, 1948, purported to describe incidents in a milk-bar in Threadneedle Street. It was not realized at the time that these incidents might be taken to have occurred in any identifiable milk-bar, but we wish to state that the article had no basis in fact, that the description of the milk-bar itself, its assistants and its customers was purely imaginary, and that no reference was intended to any existing establishment.

Sport for Art's Sake

ANY visitor to the new "National Gallery of British Sports and Pastimes" at Hutchinson (late Derby) House who is fortunate enough to be familiar with the works of "Pont" will be repeatedly reminded of the series of water-colours, "Official War Artists at Work," which appeared in these pages in 1940. Two of these pictures—"With the Royal Artillery" and "Raider At Dawn"—ought to find a permanent home in this gallery, for they have the very last word, it seems to me, on this immensely interesting subject. I will try to explain why.

Sporting artists fall into three groups—artists who make a casual mention of sport in odd corners of their canvases, artists who would be sportsmen if they could have their time over again, and sportsmen who fancy their chances with pencil and brush. The great Constable is of course in the first and easily the largest section. He is represented in this collection by "Stratford Mill on the River Stour" or "The Young Waltonians," which Mr. Punch's art critic assures me is a truly brilliant landscape. My view, however, is that the fishing-rods in the foreground were introduced merely to emphasize the picture's structural entity and have nothing whatever to do with the artist's piscatorial propensities. I regard many of the exhibits as equally suspect in this way.

As a keen sportsman and pastimesman I feel that sport is too precious a thing to be messed about by irresponsible artists. Constable's fishing-rods are only the thin end of the wedge. It

won't be long, in this democratic and egalitarian age, before our artists are compelled to include a touch of sport in any picture they want to sell. Their only patrons will be pools-promoters, go-betweens and contact men whose acquisitive instinct though strongly developed is not particularly aesthetic. Sport, then, will be at the mercy of the art-boys, and in next to no time they'll start tampering with the rules. They'll want cricketers dressed in ultramarine flannels and crimson pads: they'll want Henry Moore-ish sight-screens, golf-links designed by Salvador Dali and Rugby footballs by Picasso.

This is not entirely fanciful. After

all, the artists have already had a go at the horse. Since the Middle Ages they have found its proportions unacceptable and have not hesitated to mutilate them in the interests of art. The head has been reduced and the neck stretched: even the mechanics of quadrupedal locomotion have been readjusted. There is no knowing what shape the poor old horse would be in now but for his timely rescue by the camera and Sir Alfred Munnings.

The same sad decline in sporting pictures is traceable in the cricket prints. At first—going right back to Halfpenny Downs and the Hambledon men—we have art for sport's sake. The artist draws the game itself with every man in his place alert and eager and quite unruffled by the easel propped against the boundary fence. Point is at point, the umpires are where they should be, and the batsman wields his bat careless of the linear complexity of the scene. Studying the oldest of these prints, the keen amateur can almost reconstruct the play ball by ball, feel for the man in the deep dropping his "sitter," and follow the eyes and ears of the sweaty square-leg to the unseen refreshment-tent. That, I claim, is great art.

The middle period begins at the point where our sporting artist worries for the first time about such things as style, form and balance. Here, the cricket is pushed into the background behind a horde of elegantly disposed spectators who face the wrong way and appear utterly indifferent to the appalling things happening behind them out there in the middle—the three batsmen



Reprinted from Punch Almanack, 1941

"Raider At Dawn"



Reprinted from Punch Almanack, 1941

"With the Royal Artillery"



First period (detail from an old print)

at the crease together, the umpire at silly-mid-off, the scorer sitting cross-legged on the wicket, and so on. This, I maintain, marks the beginning of decadence in British sporting art. Finally we come to the immediate pre-photographic period when cricket disappears completely under the eliminating glare of the portrait painter. Here is Lord Thomas Noddy draped becomingly about his bat. There are no wickets, no wicket-keeper, no fielders—only a few snow-capped mountains in the low background. Seeing these latter-day prints for the first time a foreign visitor would assume quite naturally and reasonably that cricket is a peculiar mystic rite indulged in by British hermits exiled in the fastnesses of Tibet. Sport for art's sake—grrr!

The last thing I want to do is to appear churlish about this notable acquisition to our "National" art collections (even if the word "national" here does not mean nationalized), but I must register a mild raising of the eyebrows about the definition of "British sports and pastimes." Looked at from abroad we are already a nation of unpredictable morons whose only redeeming quality is an ability to invent new games and lose them gracefully. It may be that our very future, in the post-Marshall-Aid world, will depend—as Mr. Shaw has suggested—on our capacity for turning out games and pastimes. Clearly, then, we must do everything possible to rationalize them, weed out the unmarketable and bring the remainder to a concert pitch of efficiency. With these thoughts in mind I fail to see how the inclusion of such items as the following can properly be justified:

"Building Card Houses," by Joseph Highmore.

"An Instance Never Before Known,"

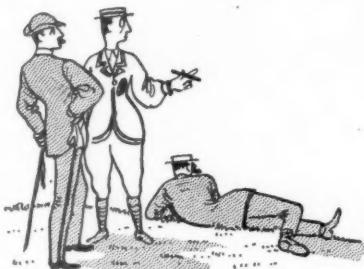
by J. Miles. A gory scene in a knacker's yard, which seems to carry equestrian art just a shade too far.

"Hatchett's Coffee House and Hotel, Piccadilly," by James Pollard. Drinking coffee and putting up at hotels are not particularly British sports. The French, who are broadminded in their definition of sports and pastimes, may possibly understand what we are driving at here, but the rest of the world will merely scoff.

"The Enthusiast," by Theodore Lane. The artist who painted this gouty angler fishing in a water-tub fell through a skylight in his twenty-eighth year and was killed. Even so the picture is not recommended.

"Portrait of a Gentleman," by Sir Thomas Lawrence. Never a very popular pastime, this.

"A Lion Attacking a Stag," by George Stubbs. Lions have not been matched against stags in England for



Middle period (detail from old print)

several million years. I don't think we ought to go back beyond, say, the second Ice Age.

"Rat Hunting," by Heywood Hardy. Catalogue note: "Rats are real vermin and their extermination is a public duty . . . there is a degree of sport in the proceedings, though it does not look too pleasant for the rat." If this occupation is "a public duty" it cannot possibly be a sport or a pastime—and I move that these pictures be withdrawn at the earliest opportunity and replaced by . . . well, there must be scores of prints of Alfred Mynn somewhere.

On the other hand there can be only unqualified support for such pictures as "Highflier" and "Sir Peter Teazle," by Sawtrey Gilpin, "Gimerack," by George Stubbs, "Bendigo (Tom Cannon up)," by A. Wheeler and "West Australian," by Abraham Cooper. I say nothing about their value as art treasures—that is not my hobby-horse—but I do say that these pictures make

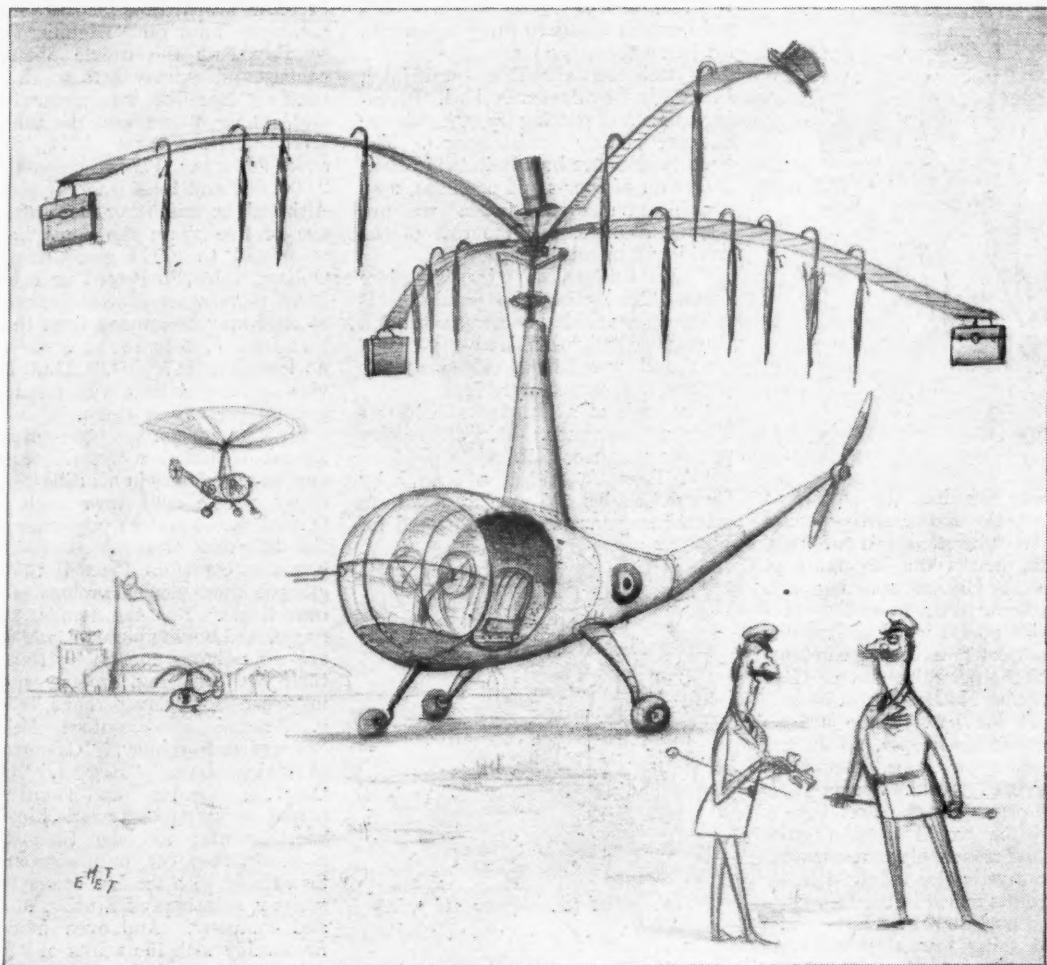
excellent propaganda for Britain. The catalogue note on "Highflier" very sensibly cuts the cackle about the canvas and quickly gets to the hoss itself: "Highflier was never beaten and among others won the following races at Newmarket—1777, Sweepstakes 900 gns.; 1778, Sweepstakes of 2,600, 600 and 1,400 gns. respectively. Although he was never raced after the age of five years the sums he won amounted to 8,920 gns. He sired Ophale, Noble, Sir Peter Teazle, Young Flora, Skyscraper, etc., and his success at stud may be gauged from the fact that from 1783 to 1801 his stock won no less than £170,407." That, in my view, is the way to talk economics and pep up the export drive.

Mr. Hutchinson has been very wise, I think, to include a pictorial record of our modern games in his collection, for many people will turn aside from Oxford Street and its peep-shows into the delightful atmosphere of this old house in Stratford Place if they can glimpse there the champions of their own times. But the tennis, soccer, rugger and boxing pictures, while they are conspicuous enough by reason of their gay colouring, are few and uninspiring. Some day, perhaps, "Chelsea v. Arsenal at Stamford Bridge," "Soccer at Highbury," "Calcutta Cup at Twickenham," "Rugger," "Centre Court, Wimbledon," and so on will be prized as gems of twentieth-century sporting art: for the time being, however, they can only compare unfavourably with the less colourful but spritely paintings of Stubbs, Morland and company. And even more unfavourably with the works of "Pont."

HOD.



Third period (from an old print)



"I suppose I shouldn't have done it, but I actually made a landing in the City."

Chorus of the Studio Audience

HEAR that? The man mentioned a name!
A name in the papers! A name we have read!
That gives the performer some kind of a claim—
Let's show him we heard what he said.
It isn't remotely amusing, but still
We ought to clap hands, it's all part of the drill—
We must show *we* saw it, or nobody will—
Clap hands, or the crack will fall dead!

It was only in yesterday's news—
That means it was written in *less than a day*!
What incredible skill! What a punctual Muse!
How soon to find something to say!
It doesn't seem funny, we freely admit,
But it's newspaper stuff, so it's certainly wit—
Any name from the news is a palpable hit—
Clap hands! Do a bit of display!

We like to encourage a chap;
You may, if you must, call us easy to please—
That's not the main reason we greet with a clap
Any point any one of us sees.
You ought not to mind our uncritical fuss,
It's not so much *him* we're applauding as *us*—
The joke wasn't good, but it might have been wuss—
Clap hands! Help the man earn his fees!

They say we distend every show,
They call us annoyingly brawlish and loud—
They fail to allow for the satisfied glow
That suffuses a non-paying crowd.
To-day we consider ourselves the élite
And to-morrow will give us still more of a treat
When we switch on to hear the recorded repeat—
Clap hands! Aren't we going to feel proud! R. M.



THE TRANSATLANTIC UMBRELLA

"There seems to be a constitutional objection to opening it right out."

MONDAY, February 14th.

—Once upon a time, when the second Labour Government was in office, the Government's supporters got into the habit of taking long week-ends and of returning tardily to their work at Westminster. Then, one Monday afternoon, the wicked Tories summoned all their forces secretly and, challenging a sudden division, defeated the Government.

This fairy story for Government Whips (which happens to be true) is becoming appropriate again, for attendances on Monday afternoons are again becoming decidedly "thin." The only respect in which the fairy story is different is that the attendance on both sides of the House is equally emaciated.

However, the news-hungry denizens of the Press Gallery live in hopes that some day something will happen.

There was certainly room for a little excitement to-day. Sir HARTLEY SHAWCROSS, the Attorney-General, provided the only touch of sensation when, asked about a news-reel film in which Mr. George Gibson had made reflections on the fairness of the Lynskey Tribunal, he said the question of proceedings had been considered but rejected. The film had been withdrawn from circulation.

Sir HARTLEY also said he did not propose to institute proceedings for perjury as a result of anything said at the Tribunal's hearings. He agreed that there had been many contradictions in the voluminous evidence, but added that that very fact inspired him with but little confidence that any part of it would be accepted by a court of justice in refutation of any other part.

Then the House drifted on to a debate about juries, on the Bill to abolish special juries (with rare exceptions) and to pay out-of-pocket expenses to jurors in general.

There was a regrettable tendency on the Government side (not entirely confined to the Back-benches) to imply that special juries were—or might be—unjust in their decisions. This was hotly contested by speakers on the Opposition benches—but the Bill was passed on its way.

TUESDAY, February 15th.—Yet another echo of the Lynskey Tribunal to-day, when Mr. ATTLEE announced the names and terms of reference of a committee to look into the activities of "contact-men" whose doings had attracted attention during the Tribunal's sittings. The Prime

Impressions of Parliament

Monday, February 14th.—House of Commons: Echoes of the Tribunal.

Tuesday, February 15th.—House of Lords: Trouble Over the Gold Coast.

House of Commons: A Communist Success.

Wednesday, February 16th.—House of Lords: Landlords are Defended.

House of Commons: So are Tenants.

Thursday, February 17th.—House of Commons: Supplementary Health Estimates.

Minister made it clear that the professional men—lawyers, chartered accountants and so on—who took charge of their client's affairs in the normal course of their duties were not affected by the inquiry.

The House heard with sincere regret that Mr. ANEURIN BEVAN, the Minister of Health, had suffered bereavement by the death of his aged mother, and the Minister was given a sympathetic reception when he entered. He was the centre of the day's debate, for it was on the Government's Bill to control rents of houses and flats let since the war.

Mr. BEVAN's first act was to accept a proposal from Mr. PHILIP PIRATIN, Communist, that the Bill should apply to all premises let since 1939, which would mean that premiums and the proceeds of the sale of furniture and



A. W. L.

Impressions of Parliamentarians

72. Mr. T. Williams (Yorkshire, West Riding, Don Valley)

Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

fittings at "fancy prices" in the period since the war began would be legally recoverable.

Mr. PIRATIN looked astonished by his own success. He seemed, in fact, scarcely to believe it, and fingered his notes so agitatedly that the House suspected he was a little disappointed at being robbed of a chance to class the Labour Government with the "Tory robbers" his Party colleague, Mr. WILLIE GALLACHER, so frequently

and so vehemently denounced.

The Opposition seemed to enjoy the situation and made semi-jocular remarks about the Government's following the Communist lead, and so on. It was plain, however, that the whole House was on the side of the victims of greedy landlords, and the proposal was agreed

to. Mr. PIRATIN slowly recovered.

Their Lordships were talking about "extraordinary and preposterous" restrictions on immigration into the Gold Coast. It seems that immigration officers have powers in that part of the world which give them the standing of dictators. Among other things, according to indignant and eloquent Lords, they have the power to put British subjects and aliens on precisely the same footing when they present themselves as immigrants, subject to all sorts of restrictions and refusals.

Lord RENNELL got very angry about it and indignantly waved a copy of the *Gold Coast Gazette Extraordinary*—"the only part of it with which the House will agree is the word 'extraordinary,'" he said.

Lord LISTOWEL, Minister of State for the Colonies, hastily claimed that there had been "much misunderstanding" about the policy laid down in the *Gazette*—and said it was promulgated to save Africans from being crowded out of their own country.

Pressed by Lord SWINTON to say whether the Secretary of State for the Colonies had known of the publication, Lord LISTOWEL said it was "an ordinary piece of legislative machinery." As every single speaker so far had dwelt on the *extraordinary* nature of the decree issued by the Gold Coast Government, this statement was received with loud astonishment.

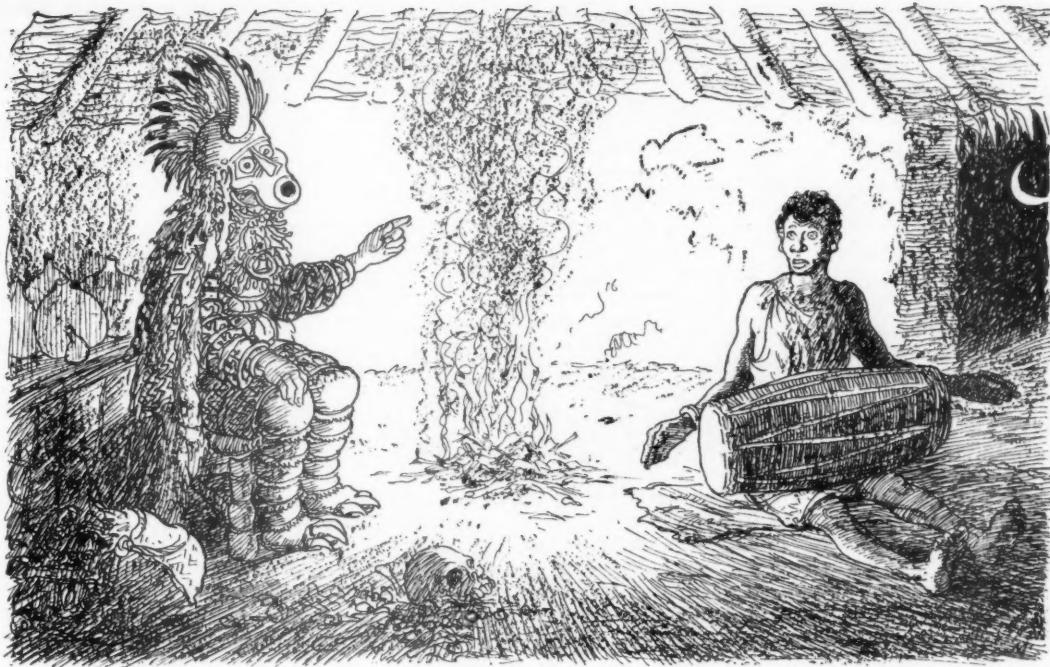
"Whoever was responsible," rapped Lord SWINTON, "it's a bad document. Its whole outlook is wrong, and it should be reconsidered."

There is to be another discussion on the subject later.

Warm tribute was paid by all Parties to the memory of the Marquess of LONDONDERRY, who had played his part in the life of the House for many years and who died last week-end. The Lord Chancellor said his passing had severed a link with the old spacious days.

WEDNESDAY, February 16th.—

The "other place" had a few words to say on the Gold Coast issue to-day. Mr. CREECH JONES, the Colonial Secretary, was asked about the famous



"Tell him the evil spirit must wait till morning. I will NOT go out on night calls."

Gold Coast Gazette Extraordinary and, after fencing a little with his interrogators, he said he was asking the Governor to look at the plans again, to see whether any alterations should be made. He added that it was important that the Africans should not be crowded out of their own land.

Mr. OLIVER STANLEY acutely pointed out that the British Citizenship Bill (Mr. CREECH JONES's own work) established common citizenship for the people of the United Kingdom and the Colonies. How, he asked, did this procedure work?

Mr. CREECH JONES replied that that was one of the reasons he had asked the Governor to look into the matter. But he did not explain how it was that it had not already been "looked into."

Rents were again under discussion. Government amendments were carried which will make the Rent Control Bill apply to all premiums and also to the custom of demanding fabulous prices for all-but-fabulous furniture and "fittings" as a condition of letting. There was general agreement that this particular racket ought to end.

There was general sympathy with, and a desire to help, unfortunate tenants whose home-hunger had forced them to accept extortionate arrange-

ments. But over in the Lords, they were talking about the other side of the picture—the hardships of landlords.

The point was made that by no means all landlords are the possessors

as ogres grinding the faces of the poor, and so on. The Lord Chancellor agreed that there was hardship among landlords, but added (a little surprisingly from one so eminently fair and just) that that was "a small thing" compared with the hardships of tenants. However, he promised that, in due time, something would be done to give justice to landlords. Lord BUCKMASTER had drawn attention to the fact that while private landlords had their rents severely restricted, local councils and other public authorities were free to fix their rents on an economic basis. That situation is to be left as it is.



Impressions of Parliamentarians

73. Lord Salisbury

of vast estates, and that many a "Little Man" was facing ruin as a result of the ownership of a few houses, which provided homes for others. Profits had faded to vanishing point, and in some cases had actually become losses, yet it was still fashionable, speakers complained, to regard all property-owners

THURSDAY, February 17th.—As a curtain-raiser to a discussion on Government waste and miscalculation—officially the subject was supplementary estimates—Mr. CHURCHILL and Mr. HERBERT MORRISON "had a go" on the topic of carelessness with the nation's cash. It did not seem to get anywhere in particular, but it evidently pleased not only the star turns but their "fans" too. And it put everybody in extraordinarily good humour for the debate which followed. Which, incidentally, did not get anywhere much, either.



"So we'll expect you both on Friday—unless you can think up a better excuse before then."

Japanese Politics

IT is widely believed by people whom, curiously enough, I never seem to have met that the study of Chinese metaphysics demands a knowledge of Chinese and a knowledge of metaphysics. (The people I do know can be divided into two classes, those who say "But my dear fellow," and those who say "What are metaphysics?") If you accept this you must accept the parallel conclusion that a study of Japanese politics involves knowing a modicum about Japanese and about politics; and if you

believe that, I have the honour to wish you a very good afternoon.

My own theory about Japanese politics is that, to the coarser Western mind, they can never be anything but intuitive. Those of us who visit news-theatres regularly, for instance, are aware that on a Japanese typewriter there are three thousand, six hundred characters; hence it is unlikely that many candidates are able legibly to commit their policies to paper for the edification of even their own fellow-countrymen. How, then, can we

Europeans hope to understand the problems about which the simple Nipponeese peasant is asked to vote?

I am put in mind of this problem by a paragraph in the paper which says that early returns in the Japanese elections indicate a "landslide victory" for the Conservative Democratic Liberals. My newspaper fails, unfortunately, to tell me what the opposition was composed of, whether there was in the field a Royalist Republican Anarchist party, a Christian Communist Irredentist faction, or a Nationalist Social-Democrat federation.

My private belief, which, like all my beliefs as far as Japanese politics are concerned, is founded purely on conjecture, is that there were probably all three, but that they stood for the same objects. If there is one characteristic of the Japanese about which we must all agree, it is that the Japanese citizen always refers to himself as "this unworthy person" or "this unspeakably degraded individual" while according to those spoken to such epithets as heaven-born, illustrious, and so on. It is therefore quite impossible to visualize a Japanese candidate standing up on a platform and saying baldly to the electorate "You must vote for me because I am a good man, and my opponent Mr. Nichi Nichi Shimbun is a bad one."

On the contrary, you would expect a Japanese election speech to contain only such passages as: "This unworthy person are so much obliged to honourable opponent for allowing him even so much as one fleeting moment with which to defile surrounding air with harsh grating voice. Honourable electors would so much delight this deformed and stupid person who now speak to you by registering vote for honourable opponent, whose heaven-inspired policy this tongue-tied and altogether worthless one are not capable even to pronounce."

As the other candidates must surely be making much the same kind of speech from their platforms, it is easy to see that very little vote-catching is likely to be done. Confronted as he must be with such a solid array of self-denigration, it will be impossible for the Japanese elector to form a really firm political conviction, and he is likely, unless excessively Westernized by the presence of the occupation troops, either to fail to vote at all or to register one vote apiece for every candidate in the field.

The result of this would be that no candidate would poll a single valid vote and the election would be null, not to say void. Some determined military governor from one of the Western

democracies would then intervene, since one of the cardinal precepts of liberty is that you must vote at elections whether you like it or not, and a conference would be held at which one of the unsuccessful candidates would be picked to offer himself for election again. It may well be that the original candidates called themselves, let us say, a Conservative, a Liberal and a Democrat. Since none of these labels adequately describes the composite programme of the unlucky citizen chosen to represent all three candidates it is not unlikely that he will go to the hustings under some such label as Conservative Democratic Liberal; nor, in the circumstances, is it improbable that he will gain a "landslide victory."

One curious aspect of Japanese politics that must be touched on before I finish concerns the effect of writing up-and-down instead of from left to right. It means, if I read the signs correctly, that instead of having "Left" and "Right" parties, the Japanese will have "Up" and "Down" parties; and that instead of shouting, as the British used to in the days when elections took place rather more often than they do now, "Down with Jones!" or "Up with Smith!" the Japs say "Right with Odamu!" and "Left with Koko!" This would sound strange indeed to Western ears, if it were not for the fact that so few Western ears belong to people who understand Japanese.

The newspaper paragraph to which I referred earlier goes on, I see, to report that the Communists won thirty-three seats as against four in the previous election. This poses an interesting problem of Up-or-Downness. You would suppose that a landslide victory for the Conservative Democratic Liberals would leave the Communists virtually no seats at all; but it is quite possible, I suppose, that in Japan the Communists—prompted, no doubt, by many generations of inbred loyalty to their Emperor—are actually more Up-wing than the Conservatives, or at any rate than the Down-wing Democratic Conservatives.

Another possibility, of course, is that the Communists were not really plain Communists but Unionist Radical Communist Agrarians, neither fundamentally Up nor Down nor good Red Fronters.

French—I think it was French—politics were once said by a famous student of such things to owe their present characteristics to the fact that the French House of Deputies has a circular debating chamber.

It would be interesting to work out the shape of the Japanese chamber from the above data.

Lines to an Old Black-out Torch

(used during the Blitz)

OLD friend, we've both been
banged about,
Your batteries have quite
conked out.
Mine too!—But there's no need to
whine.
At least we've both seen better days,
When London town was all ablaze
And we were the front line.

I wonder if in some dark night,
Our batteries renewed,
We'll live again, and see the light
That shone, no whit subdued,
From English hearts, while London
town
Stood up to Hitler's dressing-down?

That light, old pal, was worth the
Blitz!
If you know what I mean
It made you feel like one who sits
At supper with the Queen.
In Death's grim face we saw it
shine
From England's heart, the world's
front line!

L'Envoi

This doggerel from overseas
Comes from a native of the U.S.A.
Who thanks God humbly on her
knees
For Britain, and for Britain's heart,
each day.





"That's just five hundred and fifty quid, and I think we can both say we've earned it."

Escape It Never

MR. TURPLE'S chief diversion was edifying literature; technically edifying. He assimilated great volumes of it apart from the tabloid bits in the newspapers. This is not to be disparaging. Uplift need not be depressing unless it is abused.

Mr. Turple's salutary walk to catch the eight-twenty each morning was along a rustic road flanked here and there by middle-class houses.

Some weeks ago when snow had whitened the stickwork of the trees and was crunchy underfoot, a great stretch of cloud was drawn from the sky and, just as the hem of it came overhead, the authorities switched off the road lamps. At that moment, in the steeliness uncovered by the cloud, a brilliant star was disclosed. It was as if the lights had been switched off the better to parade its lustre. It did not wink, it was steady, and white in colour with a slaty tinge.

It was whilst observing this star that Mr. Turple first met the military-looking man with the borzoi.

He walked on wishing that he had known the name of the star, it would have lent more authenticity when he described it later. Then it occurred to him what great periods of time he had wasted in his life all of which would have been better occupied studying astronomy. A feeling of regret developed that threatened to thrust him into the abyss before he remembered that the wise man regards the past as a closed book and lives only in the present and for the future. This steadied him and he had almost returned to normal when, suddenly, he almost tripped over himself as he slewed round. He had just recalled the man with the dog.

"Now I wonder who that is?" Mr. Turple asked himself, feeling slightly injured at not knowing.

The question simply catapulted from his mind. No doubt a strange man leading a borzoi would excite little comment in the cosmopolitan areas, but it is different in a village where everyone knows everyone else.

As the question spent itself Mr. Turple became regretful again, this because of the current book he was reading. The writer treated of idle curiosity and the unhealthiness of it. It grew and grew until it developed into morbid curiosity. It might seem harmless to the victim of it but that was not the whole point; it was the universal effect that mattered.

"No beautiful or impure thought is ever lost, it remains operative and goes to increase the eternal good or evil of the cosmos."

This statement was not Mr. Turple's, it had been originated or quoted by the writer of the book who was pursuing his life's work. Mr. Turple would never have dreamed of putting together such a sentiment; his line was undercarpeting and felts. None the less he was dejected again, for he had realized his own weakness for idle curiosity and had vowed to dispel it only the day before. Yet he had succumbed at the very first trial.

He met the man with the borzoi

again the next morning. He was tall with severe features and had on a good overcoat. Also, on this occasion, he wore a black eye-patch. This was unkind on the part of fate, it whipped away Mr. Turp's every support. Questions arose in him like starlings from a field. Who was the man? Where did he come from? How long had he been here? Whereabouts . . . ?

By the process of stopping and bending with his fists clenched and elbows close to his sides, Mr. Turp curtailed the questions. He relaxed and held his head so that it was perfectly balanced on his spinal column. In that position he took five deep breaths, ensuring that the cold air passed through the upper cavities of his lungs as well as the lower.

He then made the supreme vow. He would banish this unwholesome curiosity by facing up to it, by fully regarding the man and borzoi each morning and then not thinking about them. It could be done. All it needed was the necessary will-power. As regards acquiring it, he told himself that a man could do worse than emulate the self-disciplinary measures of the old eremites. Not all of them, of course, but some. No modern could be expected to spend a winter day immovable on a boulder outside a cave, but there were other exercises that permitted clothing to be worn.

The next morning Mr. Turp regarded the man and borzoi intently. He passed them and then began to banish them from his thoughts. Again he applied the method of taking deep breaths as he walked, concentrating wholly on holding them as long as possible and drawing up the air as far as he could. Once, one of them exploded and he just managed to grab his eyeglasses as they leapt from his nose, but the idea worked.

As he neared the station he told himself that he had succeeded. He had had his doubts but they were superfluous. The thing was easier than he had imagined. The only things required were sufficient will-power and the knack of squirting white-hot suggestion into the subconscious. To make absolutely certain he took the bus the following morning over the longer route to the station and discovered that he could banish the man and dog from his thoughts without even seeing them. He felt dynamic. Supercharged! There were few things better than being the captain of one's soul.

The next morning his neighbour Robinson joined him for the walk to the station. They met the man and dog. When they had passed, and without the slightest hint from Mr. Turp,

Robinson began to explain the man. He had moved into one of the houses along the road. There were only two of them, the man and his wife, and they went out to business together. Normally this would have meant leaving the borzoi alone in the house all day, but they had contrived to engage someone to mind it. The man had been an Army major during the war . . .

And Mr. Turp's world crashed. He knew that he would never eliminate his curiosity. He ought to have known and had better cease trying. It was inborn. Realization came as Robinson mentioned the farming out of the dog. Mr. Turp's ears flipped.

"I wonder who with?" he opened.

Foretold

TAKE them in your left hand; now shuffle, then wish and cut three times.

Oh, look! You've cut *yourself*; that is good. I can't tell you exactly, but it's good—it's always good. And there's a letter, and a man between colours. I expect that is the one you had this morning—he is between colours, at least, he is not very dark, I mean his hair is not black; anyway you

will soon see how it all comes out, though he only said he would be away, but then the cards merely say a letter, so it does work out as far as it goes. Now what is approaching you is a change of residence or long land journey, a surprise or surprise visit and the Queen of Diamonds, that is, a fair or grey-haired woman. Rather curious, because you are going to London and Sybil is fair, and she is sure to be surprised to see you, unless you let her know. In your home and relatives you have a gift or paper money, with a document and a large town or building—obviously the bank, because a cheque could count as the document, and you will be going there, won't you; isn't it strange? Now we come to new friends; this is a dark elderly widow, but it might be your cousin, she is not elderly of course, but she is much older than you and looks her age, don't you think, and she could pass as a new friend, because you haven't seen much of her till she came here. I never like that card, and there's that Knave—he's a tale-bearer, and with the spade, which means a break or sickness, she may be ill, or fall out with someone, perhaps that man, or listen to him and then be difficult. But in your affections you get your wish, only there is delay and annoyance, and a dark business woman comes into it somehow, so she may interfere and cause delay, and that would mean annoyance too, even if she didn't intend any harm. You see how right the cards can be.

In your fresh undertakings there is a disappointment to the house and good news, so there is some kind of disappointment at first, though there is good news, but perhaps it is not so good as you expect, if you do expect any, or of course it may just be a disappointment first and good news afterwards. You see, that is just how things do happen. In your news you have a military man, or a fair or grey-haired man, at night-time. Of course that could mean in the evening paper, and be just someone you read about. What will trouble you no more is a false friend a short distance away by road, but you may never even know he was false, because he doesn't trouble you. Right over your head is a useful business man, a sure removal, a letter about money, good news and kind thoughts—all good cards and might mean almost anything pleasant, even in a small way. You must look at it like that, and then you will see how true the cards can be; if they don't mean one thing, they mean another, and it is afterwards that you will see they meant whatever it was if you remember what they said.



"No, no, old chap. I'm positive it's the stalagmite that sticks up, and the stalactite that hangs down, like this."

At the Play

Antigone and *The Proposal* (NEW)—*The Human Touch* (SAVOY)—*Romeo and Juliet* (THEATRE ROYAL, BRISTOL)

EVERYWHERE this week we are *E* in the battle line. At the New the principal fight is that of humanity against political expediency; at the Savoy one man fights against the

VIVIEN LEIGH and Mr. GEORGE RELPH as *Antigone* and her uncle *Creon*. It is all rather grey and bleak; vainly we wait through the evening for some splendour of speech to fire the heart.

For all ANOUILH's adroit straddling of the centuries—*Antigone* must be always a symbol of Resistance—the play would be better on the firm classical base. When Sir LAURENCE OLIVIER, as *Chorus* in a white tie, is pointing the moral of the piece in his superb diction, it is hard not to remember his own performance of *Oedipus* more than four years earlier. I find, after a day or two, that the French *Antigone* does not linger in the mind. I can hear the tones of OLIVIER, see Miss LEIGH's set face and tortured eyes, and hear Mr. RELPH, an actor ready for all tasks, gallantly turning his honey-cake voice

DERRICK PENLEY in ginger whiskers, are all exceedingly comic and resourceful. Miss SIMPSON is probably the first actress to recline with grace upon a sofa painted on the back-cloth. As for Mr. CUSHING, as the palpitating suitor, he swoops over the scene like a fitful tornado.

The pace is slower at the Savoy, where Mr. J. LEE-THOMPSON and Mr. DUDLEY LESLIE settle down in the Edinburgh of 1847. They have a good theme: Dr. James Simpson's fight for painless surgery and the recognition of chloroform, and they make of it a kind of Edinburgh medical festival, the stage brimming with doctors, occasional operations (off), a Lunacy Board in session, and Mr. ALEC GUINNESS—on most familiar terms with his chloroform which he calls Chlorry—succumbing to the anaesthetic on a much-used sofa. It is an honest enough document, though one cannot help asking if the medical lights of Edinburgh in 1847 were really so dolorous a collection of bats, ravens, and boomers. *James Simpson*, on the other side, is an appealing figure, and Mr. ALEC GUINNESS captures both his charm and his crusading spirit, with Miss SOPHIE STEWART, as his wife, warmly at his side. The malcontents are led by a *Professor Syme*: he has some real character, and Mr. JOHN LAURIE makes a pouncing eagle of him. (But that last-minute conversion from eagle to dove is awkward on the stage.)

Bristol, honoured by Mr. HUGH HUNT's translation to the see of the London Old Vic, cheered him affectionately at the end of *Romeo and Juliet*. His farewell to the West is a revival of the lyric tragedy that satisfies ear and eye. Its moonlight is untarnished: we feel, too, that noon heat in which the mad blood stirs. The play moves swiftly, in the flush of its spring, from the first brawl under those hill-borne towers—an exquisite back-cloth by a young designer, Mr. ALAN BARLOW—to the "glooming peace" of the Capulet tomb. There Mr. JOHN PHILLIPS, who never allows *Friar Lawrence* to drone into boredom, utters the long speech now seldom heard upon the stage. Acting does not always match direction; but the lovers, Mr. JOHN BYRON and Miss JANE WENHAM, let the verse stream; Mr. ROLF LEFEBVRE and Miss JILL BALCON know about those curious Capulets who seem either to be tossing away "trifling foolish banquets" or sitting up most of the night; and Miss NUNA DAVEY, a warm plum of a *Nurse*, has cut every traditional wheeze and cackle. J.C.T.



STRAINED RELATIONS or LISTENING TO UNCLE
Creon MR. GEORGE RELPH
Antigone MISS VIVIEN LEIGH

linked terrors of bigotry and pain; and down at Bristol Montagues and Capulets are biting their thumbs and rattling rapiers.

Criticism turns into war correspondence; but not all of these battles stir the blood. On paper the broil at the New should be exciting enough, for the matter is that of Greek tragedy, the Sophoclean tale of *Antigone* and her defiance of *Creon*. But if the tale is the old one—the refused burial, *Antigone's* stand for human rights, and the dark, mounting sorrow of Thebes—the manner is that of a modern Frenchman, JEAN ANOUILH, in the translation of LEWIS GALANTIÈRE. The glory that was Greece loses lustre in its modern setting—and this in spite of a most ingenious production by Sir LAURENCE OLIVIER and much sensitively-keyed speaking by Miss

to the anxious argument of *Creon*. Even so, the play has left no impression comparable with the tragic surge of the 1945 *Oedipus*. (It should certainly be freed from such a note of bathos as the description of *Eurydice's* death.)

Even if—for one playgoer at least—*Antigone* fails to summon the thunders, the Old Vic evening begins in lightning. CHEKHOV's little farce of *The Proposal* streaks by before you know it has gone. This is not the CHEKHOV of sweet melancholy. It is a fantastic, head-over-heels romp for three people, woer, woed, and heavy father, and Sir LAURENCE OLIVIER seems to have chosen it for the impish delight of seeing just how fast an actor can move on the stage. Mr. PETER CUSHING and Miss PEGGY SIMPSON (here the fight is between woer and woed), and Mr.

At the Ballet

Ballets de Paris de Roland Petit
(PRINCES)

A Wedding Bouquet (COVENT GARDEN)

ONE of the fascinating aspects of the French genius is its brilliance in improvisation. The fruits of this quality are to be met with in every sphere, not only in art and conversation but in practical matters also, so that even the apparatus of everyday life often bears a resemblance to a scrap of flashing repartee suddenly begun, as suddenly broken off, and left, as it were, congealed in its unfinished state, waiting for the last word to be said. The last word never is said—that is part of the charm. Such was—and no doubt still is—the electric light in a certain Paris studio. The wire had been left hanging in nonchalant festoons from sundry hooks and nails, barely attached at one end to a switch and at the other to a lamp. The electrician had gone away, never to return. The insulation had in the course of time perished and the switch administered a sharp lesson to anyone unwise enough to touch it, though without causing any actual loss of life. For the apprehensive, however, a stick was in the end provided with which to manipulate the switch and life went on as before.

This kind of thing, for all its charm, has its dangers. In the sphere of ballet it can produce strokes of genius like *Les Forains*, which the Ballets des Champs-Elysées has given several times in London; but it can also produce *Que le Diable l'Emporte*, with which the Ballets de Paris de Roland Petit opened their season at the Princes Theatre. This is about an eighteenth-century dancing-master (GORDON HAMILTON) who is in the habit of consigning his clients to the Devil, until one day the Devil himself appears and claims the pretty laundress who happens to be there. This, the programme tells us, is the plot. But all the audience sees, while listening to some gaily commonplace music, is a flurry of beautiful costumes by ANDRÉ DERAIN (the delicate colouring of which is ruined by harsh white lighting) and, floating somewhere amid the wrack, the smiling face of JOAN SHELDON, the *Laundress*.

Les Demoiselles de la Nuit was the best ballet in the first night programme, though it too suffered from improvisation. The queer story by JEAN ANOUILH is about a young man (ROLAND PETIT) who comes to a strange house for a wedding, and finds that all its inhabitants are cats. The house is all ghostly-grey, the walls

stuck with shadowy newspapers and the doors hung with cobweb curtains. The bride is a white kitten with a blue bow (COLETTE MARCHAND) who yearns to be human. The young man falls in love with her and takes her away. But though she takes on human form she is still a kitten. The last scene, which looks fraught with peril, presents the roof-tops, whose call the kitten cannot resist. The young man pursues her thither, but falls—six inches—to death. These roof-tops bring as much trouble to the stage staff as they do to the young man. The musical interlude, played while they are put into position, proved to be too short, and we were left in silence broken only by thumps and shouts from behind the curtain, and strangled noises from an exceedingly voluble loud-speaker in the wings. We were on safer ground with the *Sugar-Plum Fairy pas de deux* from *Casse-Noisette*, well danced by NINA VYROUBOVA and VLADIMIR SKOURATOFF, but *L'Œuf à la Coque*, a burlesque of revue, failed in its effect for lack of pace and finish.

Lord BERNERS' frolic, *A Wedding Bouquet*, has taken its place in the repertoire at Covent Garden. In the last revival GERTRUDE STEIN's words were spoken by CONSTANT LAMBERT, but here they are sung by a Greek chorus, the lady members of which sport straw boaters, for the period is the early nineteen-hundreds. The choreography is by FREDERICK ASHTON. The subject of the ballet is a wedding

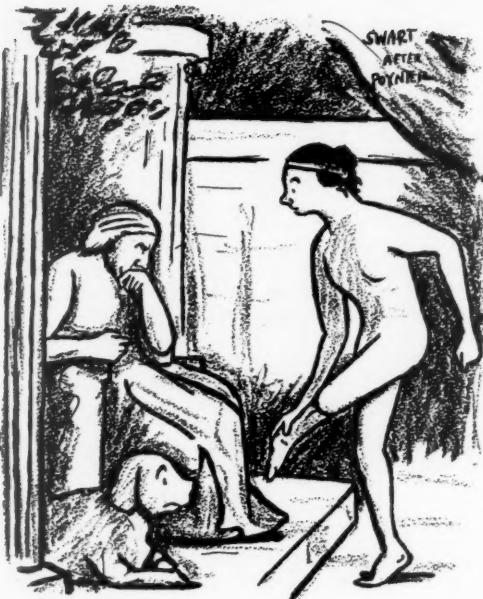
in provincial France, and the family homestead, a farmhouse, is shown on the backcloth. The chorus keeps up a lively flow of comment, advice and objurgation, to which the gay and sophisticated mockery of the music is a perfect counterpart. We are assured that the *Bride* is "Charming! charming! charming!" Of the *Bridegroom*, "they all speak as if they expected him not to be charming." Then there is *Julia*, "known as forlorn," who has been "ruined" by (and is an embarrassment to) the *Bridegroom*, and who "has no plans for the winter." There is also *Josephine*, a lady of rather doubtful reputation with an all-embracing smile, roses in her hat, and a strong inclination for the bottle. ("Josephine, you will not be asked to the wedding!") There is *Pépé*, *Julia's* horrid little dog, and sundry other characters most of whom, it seems, are slightly shady.

A Wedding Bouquet is a brilliant piece of satire, aiming its shafts not only at provincial life but at weddings in general and ballet in particular. The principals are MARGARET DALE (the *Bride*), ROBERT HELPMAN (every *Bridegroom* would like to bid the guests good-bye in just this fashion), JUNE BRAE (*Josephine*), MOIRA SHEARER (*Julia*) and ANNETTE PAGE (*Pépé* the dog). D. C. B.

• •
One for the Effects Department
"I was ushered through a locked door."
B.B.C. Talk.



"Would you mind removing your hat?"



"It's no good dancing about on one leg, madam—I can't take any more patients on my list."

(With apologies to "A Visit to Æsculapius" in the Chantrey Bequest Exhibition.)

Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Literary Criticism

As a critic, Lord DAVID CECIL is in the tradition of Lytton Strachey and Virginia Woolf, expressing a highly civilized attitude to life and literature in a clear, delicate and pointed style. *Poets and Story-Tellers* (CONSTABLE, 10/-), a collection of nine essays, opens with an appreciation of "Antony and Cleopatra" as an expression of Shakespeare's delight in dominion and magnificence, a delight which was by no means as unwavering as Lord DAVID CECIL suggests. More valuable is the next essay, a novel and subtle interpretation of Webster's underlying purpose in his two great plays. The author's sympathetic understanding of Thomas Gray as a man was evident in his recent book, "Two Quiet Lives." Here he examines Gray as a writer, pointing the contrast between the eighteenth-century scholar-aesthete and Walter Pater, a typical scholar-aesthete of the nineteenth century. Jane Austen means even more to him than Gray. Why so calm a writer should kindle such fiery zeal in her lovers is an interesting question. Lord DAVID CECIL, however, controls himself sufficiently to make out a good case for esteeming Jane Austen's perception of moral quality more highly than that of any other novelist. To be rebuked even by Tolstoi, he says, would upset him much less than to incur the disapproval of Jane Austen. Of the remaining essays the one on E. M. Forster might serve as a model of how to treat a living author, its praise never becoming fulsome or its indication of faults betraying ill-will.

H. K.

French Stained Glass

What the fresco is to the Romanesque church the stained-glass window is to the Gothic. It is not there, M. LOUIS GRODECKI says, to light the church, though incidentally it does. It is there to instruct the faithful—a jewelled mosaic of religious themes, monumental, not decorative. Even Villon's illiterate old mother could distinguish the blessed in paradise from the myrmidons of hell; and some of the thirty-two magnificent colour-plates of *The Stained Glass of French Churches* (LINDSAY DRUMMOND, 45/-) offer us similar facilities while enabling us to see how the ornamental aim of the fifteenth century, superseding the admonitory aim of the twelfth, goes with a waning artistry and an uncraftsmenlike lack of deference to the material. History and technique are dealt with authoritatively in M. GRODECKI's preliminary essay; but because the illustrations should have a very wide appeal one regrets that neither the essayist nor the translators have shown much consideration for the ordinary reader. Where are the brushes of cat's hair and donkey's mane that the monk Theophilus used for his cartoons? Where are the footnotes for words like "vesica" and "guilloched"? But from Saint-Denis through Chartres, Bourges and the Sainte-Chapelle, to Mulhouse and back to Paris, the pictures, whose gloss is even more splendid than glass, hold their own and promote the speculations of the text.

H. P. E.

Martin Tupper

Mr. DEREK HUDSON's *Martin Tupper: His Rise and Fall* (CONSTABLE, 18/-) is a delightful book, witty, sympathetic and well-balanced. Occasionally, in his affection for Tupper, Mr. HUDSON tries to find more merit in his verse than it contains, and once even ranks a ballad by Tupper with Macaulay's "Lays." But in general he is content to rest his case for Tupper on his unsubduable courage and good-humour under very severe tests, for he was, as his friend Gladstone put it, "much and peculiarly tried." The son of a wealthy physician, who started him off with £10,000, Tupper had no early difficulties to contend with. Apart from its immense sales in the States his "Proverbial Philosophy" went into thirty-eight editions between 1838 and 1860, being perfectly in tune with the sentiments of an expanding middle-class which still preserved the piety of its evangelical forbears. Yet he never made more than two thousand a year, and after 1860 his sales dropped sharply, and the papers, from the most dignified to the most scurrilous, combined to ridicule him. There has perhaps never been a popular author who, on going out of fashion, has been so mercilessly and continuously guyed. Yet he bore it all, and much domestic trouble as well, with wonderful equanimity, went on writing, gave public readings, tried his hand without success at various inventions, applied in vain for a number of posts, and died much regretted by the press, who particularly commended the fortitude they had enabled him to perfect.

H. K.

Peace, But Few Blessings

Yet another soldier returns from the wars to find that things at home are not all that fancy might have painted them. It is not, however, for the familiarity of its theme that *A Man Reprieved* (CAPE, 9/6) is vulnerable to criticism. That all the best fictional themes are in essence commonplace is itself a commonplace; and Mr. ARTHUR CALDER-MARSHALL might unanswerably claim that what was good enough for Homer and Æschylus is good enough for him. The legitimate exception which may be taken to his book

is that there is not a character in it which engages our sympathies. In nearly all of them there is some repellent streak of meanness or malice: the others are neutral at best. That Julius should have disliked his wife is in no way surprising. Never was there a more petty-minded little vulgarian. But the swift transference of his affection to her best friend lacks the element of inevitability which, dramatically at any rate, would seem to be its necessary justification; nor is his contempt for his brother sufficiently explained by the fact that the unfortunate man was an industrialist. The explanation indeed lies in Julius's own nature. His maladjustment to circumstance is not the fruit of his war experience alone. We are told that he had an unhappy childhood, but one suspects an even more fundamental trouble—that he was born with a nasty taste in his mouth. His story, as told by Mr. CALDER-MARSHALL, is far from uninteresting; and it is very ably presented. But one could have wished it a less persistently disgruntled hero.

F. B.

"Kau Blouzio"

To a world full of fondering colonies, in which the worst of Europe has too often superseded the best of native life, primeval Africa presents a significant challenge. In Liberia, for instance, a coastal façade, displaying emancipated negroes under American patronage, hides a hinterland in which the last of the indigenous tribes live their own life in so far as the "Government" permits them. The wife of a botanist on an American rubber plantation, Mrs. ESTHER WARNER was singularly well-equipped for genuine native contacts. As a sculptor she had already assimilated negroid technique and she took a keen interest in anthropology. A certain crudity of outlook that has been an American contribution to the arts since the day of Walt Whitman saw her serviceably through the more bestial aspects of her surroundings. In fact *New Song in a Strange Land* (GOLLANZ, 16/-) portrays her with convincing animation as a social success with the real Liberia. She was not impressed by American or Americo-Liberian society. (One fellow-countrywoman characteristically remarked that she would leave this lousy place to-morrow if she could get anyone to make the beds at home.) "Kau Blouzio," on the contrary, pulled her weight; and has used her graphic narrative to enlist sympathy for the underdog, so obviously better worth backing than the animal on top.

H. P. E.

Little Things that Add Up

In a laboratory in the University of Cincinnati a scientist sits up into the night contrasting the bedroom manners of small birds, noting the plateside behaviour of mice trooping to an ample cafeteria run for their benefit. An unconventional laboratory. An unconventional scientist. The birds are on the establishment, the mice unofficial guest-artists few knew about, not even the janitor. Many will know about them now, if *Everyday Miracle* (GOLLANZ, 8/6) has the success it deserves. Although mainly about beasts, it is a book full of a gentle and perceptive humanity. Dr. GUSTAV ECKSTEIN is a zoologist with the imagination to trace cosmic significance in the hang of a mouse's tail and the humour to see the aberrations of a cockroach in much the same perspective as our own self-important little eccentricities. He has the rewarding trick of conveying to others the fascination he finds in his own work. Simplicity lies at the back of the trick. The most cunning simplicity. For he writes the best kind of postcard style, rather, in fact, as this review is being written. Among the things

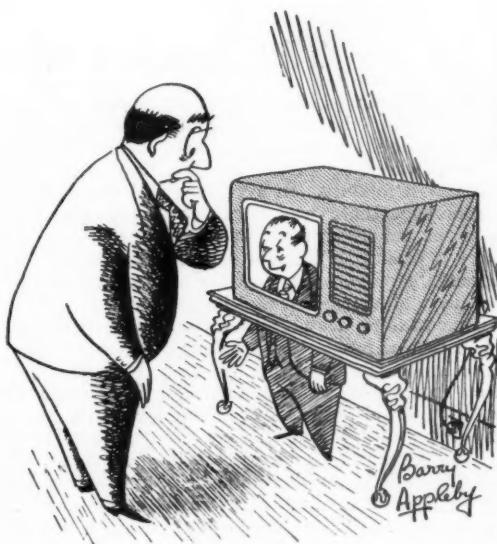
on which he speculates is why man has been slow to bath when the baby bird comes out of the egg determined to do so. Among the strange things he describes is a terrible and dramatic battle between two unicellular monsters, a paramecium and an amoeba, observed under a microscope, a visit to the Moscow Zoo where the Director gave as a reason for keeping two pretty girls in a cage the importance of illustrating the oneness of all living things, and a tomcat of his acquaintance who leaves home every Monday night at exactly 7.45 and braves difficult traffic to mount a windowsill from which he can sate his passion for watching nurses gambling.

E. O. D. K.

One Way of Life

In *Spade Among the Rushes* (PHOENIX HOUSE, 12/6) Miss MARGARET LEIGH tells of her life as a crofter from 1941 to 1947 in the Western Highlands. Smirrisay, where she took over land and made a derelict house habitable, is practically an island, for the only alternative to the sea-way is a bridle path, impassable, in most places, for wheels. There she lived (and if her hopes came true lives still), speaking Gaelic with her neighbours of the other five households, cutting bracken for manure, milking cows, making a home and garden in the wilderness, enjoying the kingdom of her own considerable mind and trying, as she says, to leave one small corner of the Highlands a little better than she found it. It is a book to make the gregarious shudder and romantics search for maps and pass-books, though she warns would-be amateur crofters of many hard facts, and says that a small Highland croft will not provide a living —only a cheap home and good food. Her comments on Highland character and the result on it of "the enervating and unpredictable climate" is sane and sound, and her story of day-to-day life, beset by difficulties and surrounded by beauty, is extremely well told. "I was," she writes of her first November, "quite alone, often tired, but intensely happy, with that serene content which is born of constructive work out of doors." She asks "What harm is there in the union of pens and ploughshares?" and her book proves how good the marriage can be.

B. E. B.





"I believe you give violin lessons to the boy who lives at number forty-seven. Well, I live next door and I'd like you to teach me to make the same kind of noises."

The Folklore Man

MANY people will be surprised to learn that apart from boiler-making the main industry of Cleckersyke Clough is the manufacture of folklore. In my time, fifty years ago, there was hardly a family in the neighbourhood that did not make a profitable sideline out of local legends, stories, songs and anecdotes, usually of a pointless and inane type. On a winter's evening when the wind whistled through the crockery and owls hooted in the chimney, we would sit round our gas-fires, talking interminably of old times. And at the end of every month, regular as clock-work, the Folklore Man, as we called him, used to visit us on his rounds.

The Folklore Man had originally been a factory inspector, but he had found quite early in his career that he

could make a much better living by collecting folklore than by inspecting factories. So he spent his time travelling round the boilermaking districts of the West Riding, calling at cottages and extracting folklore from the only too willing occupants. Some of it he would sell to literary agencies and correspondence schools for short story writers. But mostly he dealt direct with the people who wrote books with titles like *Rambles in Boilerland*, *'Neath West Riding Skies*, and *Odd Corners in Cleckersyke Clough*. He drove a hard bargain, but always gave fair market prices. He was a breezy pink-faced little man, whose only apparent connection with the literary world was a habit of wearing bright yellow bow-ties with a design of purple boilers.

We used to look forward to his visits,

no one more so than old Mrs. Dankshaw, who as well as being a noted amateur taxidermist, was the champion retailer of folklore in the neighbourhood. The Folklore Man had a high regard for her, which she returned, often giving him presents of small stuffed animals as tokens of her esteem. An incident which unfortunately came near to marring their friendship will serve to illustrate the Folklore Man's methods. It may also shed a lurid light on family life in our neighbourhood.

One evening I happened to be sitting in old Mrs. Dankshaw's cottage when the Folklore Man was expected. As this cottage was a fairly typical specimen of a Yorkshire domestic interior of fifty years ago, it may be of some interest to describe it. And in any case, the scale model at the Victoria and Albert Museum has always seemed to me to be inaccurate in several details—the flypapers, for instance, are of the wrong colour, and the artificial pork-pie in the horn of the Edison Bell phonograph strikes a jarring note. As for the purple bicycle-saddle on the mantelpiece, I can only say that no one ever had anything but a perfectly plain bicycle-saddle on the mantelpiece in my time, whatever people may do nowadays.

Picture, then, a small low-ceilinged room, lighted only by a flickering gas-fire. Most of the available space is taken up by a great steaming tub full of washing, and round the walls are bamboo tables holding stuffed ostriches, marmosets, bats and beavers. A stuffed haddock gapes from the oven. Curtains of macintosh, looped up with heavy iron dog-chains, complete what can only be described as the ensemble.

In the middle of the room old Reuben Dankshaw sat in a basket-chair, quietly playing an ophicleide, or keyed serpent, a wind instrument generally described in works of reference as obsolete, but in the West Riding, on the contrary, still very much alive, even aggressively alive, as many a bumptious London music critic has found to his cost. By the sink, half in shadow, sat Arthur, Mrs. Dankshaw's younger son, and under the sink, wholly in shadow, sat her only daughter Tryphosa, reading a copy of the Local Government Act of 1911. As she traced out the words with a rusty forefinger a low murmur came from her lips, and mingling with the drip-drip of a leaking tap and the fitful boom of Reuben's ophicleide, made up a bizarre and dismal symphony.

Presently a loud double knock was heard at the door, and the Folklore Man came in. "Well, Mrs. D.," he said cheerily, rubbing his hands and

peering round the dimly-lighted room, "what have you got for me this time? Something better than last month, I hope?"

It was his habit to chaff Mrs. Dankshaw in this way, and she usually took it all in good part. On this occasion, however, she seemed curiously ill at ease, as in a low trembling voice she began to recite a long story called "The Fleyboggard of Grampus Moor Top." After a time the Folklore Man, who had been making notes, humming to himself the while, suddenly said in a brisk tone:

"Hm. Can't give you much on that, I'm afraid. Seven-and-six. All right?" He half rose from his chair.

"Ten bob," said old Mrs. Dankshaw.

"Right. Split the difference. Eight shillings."

Mrs. Dankshaw did what was for her a rapid mental calculation. But after about half an hour she had to give up. The money changed hands, and the Folklore Man, after drinking a glass of Mrs. Dankshaw's vitriol and ginger wine (a famous specific against blood-clots), went on his way. All at once I noticed that Reuben Dankshaw had flung down his ophicleide and was staring hard at his mother.

"You sold him 'The Fleyboggard,'" he said in a hoarse voice. "It was *my* story. Father left it to me in his will. Anyhow it was worth seventeen and six at least." His mouth opened and closed convulsively, while the blood coursed from his face to his feet and back again. Suddenly he got up and made for the door, evidently with the idea of catching up with the Folklore Man and getting the story back. Old Mrs. Dankshaw rose too. So did Arthur and Tryphosa. For a moment the whole family jostled in the doorway. Then Mrs. Dankshaw got her foot caught in Reuben's ophicleide-case, tripped over a stuffed mongoose, and broke her leg. It was several months before she was back in the folklore market, and she could never quite forgive Reuben, or for that matter the Folklore Man either.

As it happened the Folklore Man had driven a better bargain than he knew in securing "The Fleyboggard of Grampus Moor Top" for eight shillings. How the story was bought for five guineas by Sir Hall Caine and used in his novel *Thus Dost Thou Thinkethst*, how it passed to the Trustees of the British Museum, and how it was finally picked up for a song in the Caledonian Market by Thomas Hardy and incorporated in act four of *The Dynasts* is one of the curiosities of literary history. Unfortunately I have no time to go into it now.

All this was in the old days, of course. Nowadays our folklore is collected by a big stream-lined motor-van which calls every Tuesday afternoon. It is delivered direct to London by special train the same evening, to be

made up into comic strips and feature articles. The waste products are sent to the Central Office of Information. It is a cleaner and more efficient method, I suppose. Yet I often think wistfully of the old Folklore Man.

G. D. ARMOUR

It was with great regret that we learned of the death, on February 17th, of Lieutenant-Colonel G. D. Armour, O.B.E., whose sporting drawings were for many years a familiar and well-loved feature of this paper. George Denholm Armour was born in Scotland on January 30th, 1864, the third son of Robert Armour. He was educated at St. Andrews, and afterwards studied at the Edinburgh School of Art and the Royal Scottish Academy. He continued his work, as painter and illustrator, in London, until the outbreak of the Great War, when, at the age of fifty, he argued his way into khaki and eventually went out to join the British Salonika Force with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

Armour was a lifelong enthusiast for every kind of field sport, and the great majority of some fifteen hundred drawings he contributed to *Punch* between 1896 and 1941 illustrated sporting subjects. Above all, he loved horses, which he drew with admirable fidelity and a fine sense of action. Apart from his drawings in *Punch*, *Country Life* and other periodicals, and his well-known illustrations of Surtees' books, Armour painted a number of equestrian portraits; his works also include *Humour in the Hunting Field* (1928) and *Bridle and Brush* (1937). He was in the tradition of Leech and Caldecott, and his kindly, spirited drawings will always be remembered.



A Hero in the Horseguards

ON VJ Day I was a Company Commander in Burma. After seven years of regimental soldiering I was an expert in Tactics, Weapon Training, Welfare and Man Management, so they sent me to an obscure administrative post in the War Office.

I never really understood what went on, but I was kept happily busy for a year or so. Then quite suddenly the work stopped coming in. After three months of sitting quietly at my desk, I succeeded in completing *The Times* Crossword. Realizing that a crisis in my life had been reached, I at once made inquiries. Surely, I argued, I could now return to my regiment.

I was disillusioned: owing to an oversight my post had survived the annual cut; it would therefore continue to be filled until the end of the current financial year when the position would be reviewed. In other words, I had nine months to go.

I went mad.

I rang for a typist and issued an express letter ordering the immediate disbandment of a Holding and Training Centre in North Wales. Hopefully I sat back and waited for the blow to fall.

Nothing happened until three weeks later when an elderly colonel came in.

He said he wished to report that his unit had completely disbanded, and to take the opportunity of thanking me for all I had done. I hurriedly posted him to Hong Kong.

Encouraged, I closed a few Transit Camps, and then, rather daringly, placed a medium Artillery Regiment in suspended animation.

Not wishing to be too destructive, I followed this by issuing formation instructions for a Commando. I located it at Banff.

No one seemed to care very much, so I initiated a minute to about twenty-five interested branches suggesting that the Commando should be doubled in size. I received several answers. One pointed out that Banff could hardly provide adequate accommodation, and suggested that the unit should be moved to Bootle. This could be effected (without, it was stressed, disturbing the balance of the overall accommodation plot) by moving the Gunners from Bootle to Budleigh Salterton, and the 1st Loamshires from Budleigh Salterton to Banff. I had no hesitation in approving this.

Financial circles, whilst not prepared to withhold agreement in principle, drew attention to the current necessity for stringent economy in overall manpower figures. They considered that

a simple compromise could be achieved by authorizing a 75 per cent. under-implementation of the approved establishment.

I worked up quite a volume of correspondence, and was soon happily busy again. In due course my name appeared in the Birthday Honours. Intoxicated with power, I dissolved the Army Cadet Force.

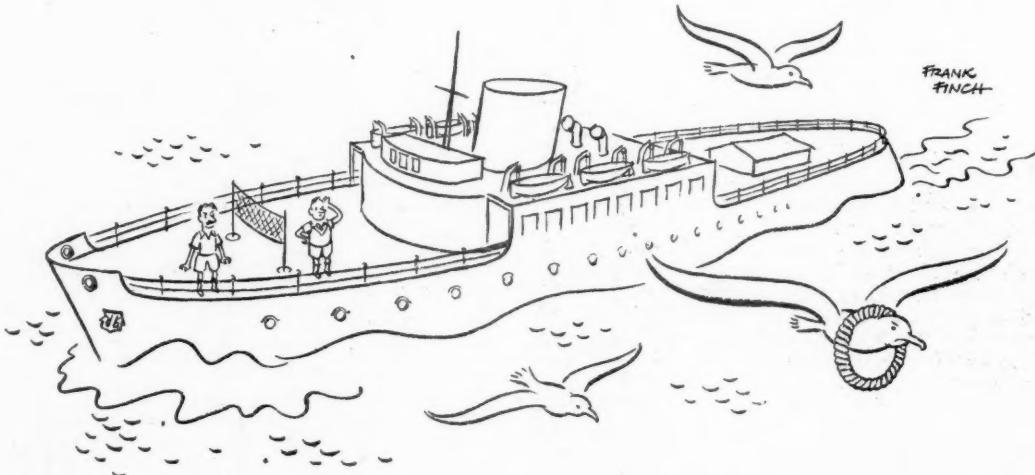
It was the end. They sent two officers of equivalent rank to drag me from my desk and telephone. The court-martial did not take long. They pulled off my buttons and issued me with a bowler-hat on repayment. I was a civilian.

After three months I realized that I was unemployable. There was nothing for it: I sat for the Civil Service. I passed. I have been allotted to the War Office. To-morrow I take up my duties at the same desk in the same office with the same dear old telephone.

The day after to-morrow I shall disband the Brigade of Guards.

Divide et Impera

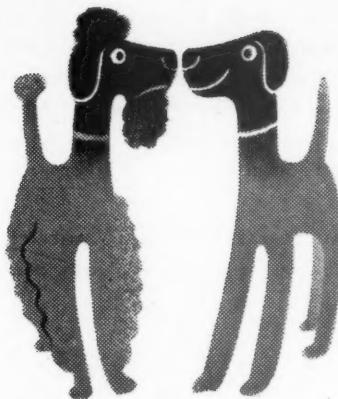
"Two things only have perturbed Moscow. One is the success of the air lift, which for five months has fed two and a quarter Berliners rather better than before, if more monotonously . . ."—*Malaya paper*.



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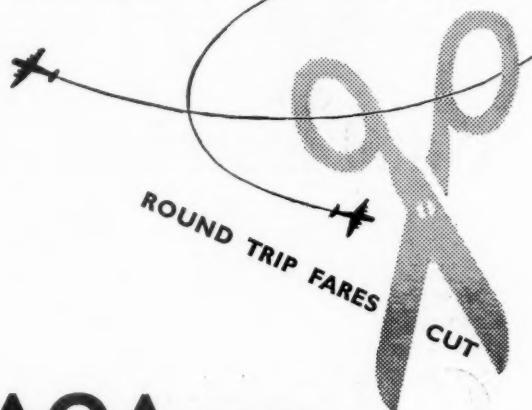
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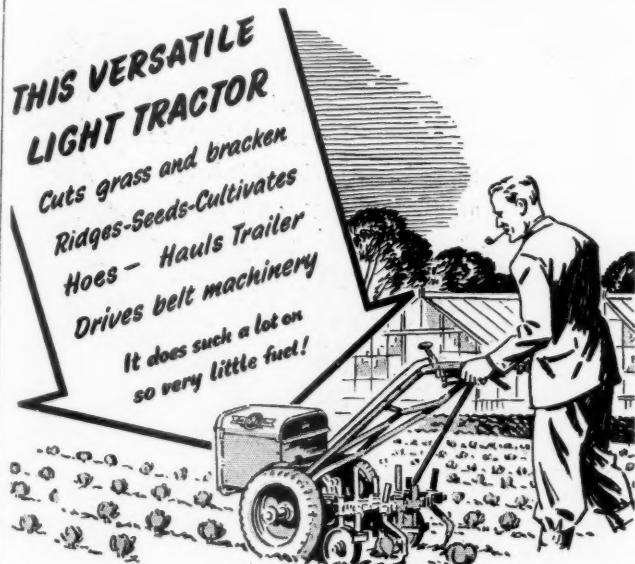
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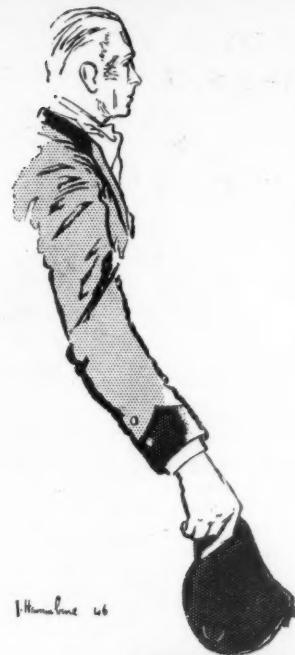
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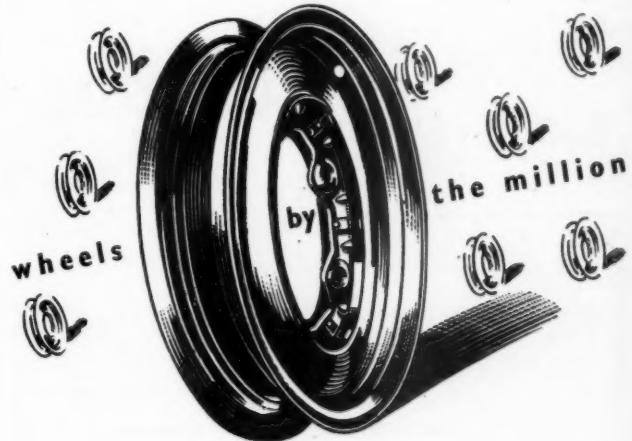
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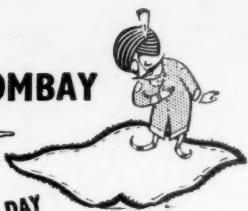
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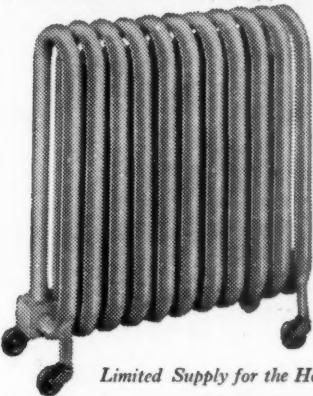
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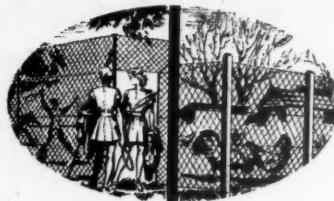


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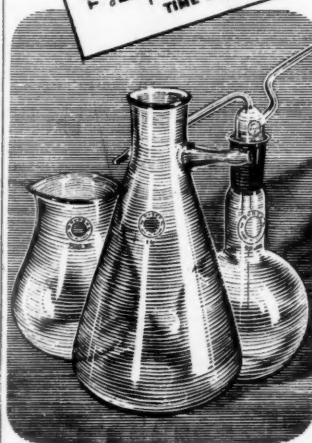
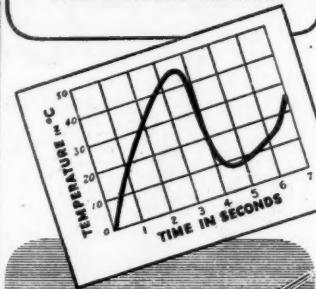
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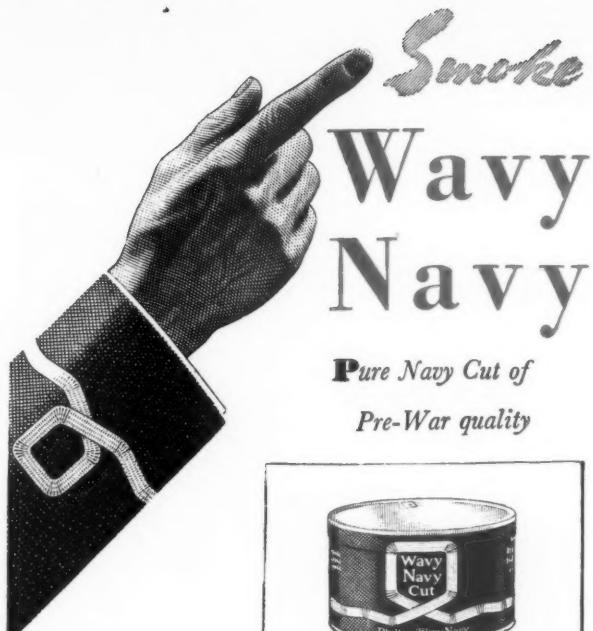


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